

















ALBANY



Engraved by H W Smith

*Anna Cora Nowatt*

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

## AN ACTRESS;

OR,

## EIGHT YEARS ON THE STAGE.

BY

ANNA CORA MOWATT.

"Every family is a history in itself, and even a poem, to those who know how to read its pages."

LAMARTINE.

FOURTH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR, REED, AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LIV.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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My autobiography needs no preface. Its apology is a promise, made to one who had the best right to demand such a pledge, that before I retired from the profession I had adopted I would publish a record of my life's experiences—a promise now rendered sacred by

“The instinct

Which makes the honored memory of the *dead*

A trust with all the living.”

If one struggling sister in the great human family, while listening to the history of my life, gain courage to meet and brave severest trials; if she learn to look upon them as blessings in disguise: if she be strengthened in the perform-

(3)



ance of "daily duties," however "hardly paid ;" if she be inspired with faith in the power imparted to a strong *will*, whose end is *good*,—then I am amply rewarded for my labor.

ANNA CORA MOWATT.

RAVENSWOOD, NEW YORK,

December 7, 1853.

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# AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ACTRESS.

## CHAPTER I.

*My Father. — Miranda Expedition. — My Mother. — Early Recollections. — La Castagne. — Description of La Castagne by my Brother Charles. — Jour de Vendange — St. Foy. — Funeral Solemnities of our Pets. — Les Compliments on the Anniversary of our Parents' Birthdays. — A first Effort. — Othello in French. — My Début. — Bourdeaux. — Embarking for New York. — Sea Voyage. — Shipwreck. — Loss of a Brother. — Description by my Brother Charles of Storm and Wreck. — Return to Havre. — Second Sailing, and Arrival in New York. — School Days. — Passion for Poetry. — Juvenile Doggerel. — First Words of Praise. — Boarding School. — Dramatic Representations at Home. — Performance of Alzire. — Early Prejudices against Theatres. — Bishop E——n. — Fanny Kemble. — First Visit to the Park Theatre. — Impressions. — The Misses Wheatley.*

MY father, Samuel G. Ogden, of New York, was the son of an Episcopal clergyman. For a number of years my father's name was prominent in the community as that of a successful merchant. He was the capitalist in the celebrated Miranda expedition, which was designed to liberate South America. This expedition owed its failure to the treachery and ambition of Aaron Burr, who, finding his own views interfered with, betrayed his friend Colonel Smith, and informed the Spanish minister at Philadelphia of the purposes of the expedition. The minister sent to the Spanish main a Balti-

more clipper, which gave warning to the authorities. Two Spanish brigs-of-war were despatched to intercept the expedition. An action took place between these brigs and the ship *Leander*, belonging to my father, and two schooners. The schooners were captured, a portion of the men hung, and the rest imprisoned. Gen. Miranda, who was on board of the *Leander*, beat off the two brigs of war — went to Trinidad, got reënforcements, and with four hundred men took possession of the town of Coro, on the Spanish coast. He remained there ten or twelve days, and only retreated because he found the inhabitants not prepared to join him. Colonel Smith (the son-in-law of President Adams) and my father were prosecuted for having fitted out an expedition against a power in amity with the United States. The trial was a highly interesting one. Thomas Addis Emmet, Cadwallader D. Colden, Josiah Ogden Hoffman, and Richard Harrison were their counsel. The defendants were honorably acquitted. Although this expedition failed, it was the first blow struck for liberty, and led to the subsequent independence of South America. Bolivar himself made this declaration, and expressed a readiness to compensate my father for his heavy losses.

My mother, Eliza Ogden, was the daughter of Francis Lewis, and the granddaughter of that Francis Lewis whose signature is affixed to the Declaration of Independence.

My earliest recollections are of a beautiful old country seat, called *La Castagne*, and situated two miles from Bourdeaux, in France. My parents were residing in Bourdeaux at the time of my birth, but removed to *La Castagne* when I was only a few months old. My

father's commercial transactions caused him to pass some eleven years abroad. During this period four daughters were born, of whom I was the second.

I have dim but most delightful remembrances of La Castagne, which come to me like half-forgotten dreams. I remember a magnificent terrace, where we children used to frolic — a beautiful walk, called “Allée d’Amour,” lined with tall trees, whose branches met and formed a bower over the head — a large pond, surrounded with statues, and filled with fishes, which it was our daily delight to feed — a gayly-painted pleasure boat, always floating on the pond — a grotto, called “Calypso’s Grotto” — a miniature waterfall, our great wonder and admiration — the whole place a very Eden of fruits and flowers.

The following description of La Castagne is furnished me by my brother Charles, to aid my imperfect recollections of the beautiful spot that we first called “home.”

“Though so many years have passed since we dwelt there, I find no difficulty in picturing to the mind every scene of La Castagne, that delightful residence of our earlier years, where life was one joyous holiday. I only fear I may fail in the description you request of me.

“La Castagne is situated in the parish of Bègles, about two miles from the gates of Bourdeaux. Its name was derived from a row of large horse-chestnut trees, which are thus called in *patois*, and which spread along the little stream that formed the boundary of one of the sides of this elegant country seat. The whole property extended over about thirty acres, situated on a sloping ground, at the foot of which ran a beautiful rivulet, that separated it from the adjoining residence; all the rest was enclosed by a high stone wall of eight feet.

“The dwelling, or chateau, which contained twenty-two rooms, and was built of stone and brick, was on the highest part of the ground, and overlooked a pleasant landscape ; in front was a beautiful *jardin Anglais*, of considerable extent, and comprising every variety of rare floral productions — the magnificent tulips especially are still fresh in my mind. In the centre of this was ‘a bower of lovely form,’ which was the frequent evening resort of our assembled family ; and running the whole length of the chateau and flower garden were several rows of shady *platanes*, or plane trees, whose smooth bark had been often disfigured by the carved ditties of loving swains. The whole formed a level terrace of about four acres ; and a stone abutment encircled one side of it, which was elevated twenty feet from the gardens below. In the rear of the main dwelling was an extensive lawn, around which were situated the out-houses, also of stone, and comprising first the dwellings of our peasants, then the wine buildings, stables, and granaries, which formed two sides ; and on the third side were extensive accommodations for poultry, whose dwelling, surmounted by a fanciful pigeon house, was in a yard furnished with cherry trees for their especial benefit. There were also an aviary and apartments for rabbits, guinea pigs, and other small quadrupeds. Extending from the rear of these buildings were eleven acres of vineyard, from which were made annually about thirty casks of wine ; then, by the side of the aviary, but below the terrace, was an extensive orchard, which furnished in abundance every variety of delicious fruits of that sunny clime. Immediately adjoining was a large vegetable garden ; and the whole remainder of the lands consisted of parks, fields, and meadows, enclosed

by beautiful alleys cultivated with great care. One of these, the 'Allée Antoinette,' was particularly curious; the trees, regular on each side, and uniting in an arch, were trimmed so artistically that scarcely a leaf ventured to grow beyond its limited barrier. Here no ray of sun could penetrate on the warmest day. And then there was the 'Allée d'Amour,' another romantic walk, besides a number of others, partaking of the same peculiarity, and affording shade in almost every direction. At the foot of the slope were a cluster of trees, and a 'bosquet' of wilder character than the rest, and this was called 'Calypso's Grotto.' In the centre, covered with green moss, were seats, one more elevated than the others. In the quiet of this secluded spot — no sound to break its sylvan solitude but the warbling of wild birds, who in happy security had chosen this favorite home, and the constant murmur of a cascade in the rivulet I have already mentioned, which flowed beneath the grotto — one could almost fancy that Calypso with her nymphs had indeed dwelt there, and there sat listening to the grave Mentor, whilst her eyes were beaming with love for the youthful Telemachus.

"But I must not forget one of the chief beauties of La Castagne, its whole length being traversed by a water-course, originating in a clear and beautiful spring, covered over with an arched dome of masonry; a lovely place that Narcissus might have made his constant resort, surrounded as it was with beautiful lilies, which, reflected in the limpid fountain, seemed to remind one that the melancholy youth had in truth been there, and there pined away. The water thence flowed through a stone canal to a circular pond of considerable depth. This place, called the 'lavoir,' was devoted to useful pur-



poses, and was the particular resort of ducks and washewomen. Thence a canal led across the gardens to the opposite extremity of the grounds, where it emptied into another and more extensive pond, forming a sheet of water of about four hundred yards in length, and one third the breadth. But this was devoted exclusively to pleasure. Its banks were supported by stone work, and ornamented with statuary of much taste. A sailing boat was ever ready for water excursions ; and several weeping willows afforded a pleasant shade for the angler. It abounded in various species of fish, particularly the carp. Running through a diminutive forest, the water thence emptied into the rivulet spoken of before.

“During our residence at La Castagne there was but one winter cold enough to form ice in the *pond*: this once it lasted several days, and afforded good skating — a recreation quite novel to the denizens of Bourdeaux. La Castagne became then the resort of most of the English and American residents of the city, and the *pond* presented a scene of liveliness and fashion seldom equalled. There were good skaters even among the ladies ; and our southern neighbors of Bègles were particularly charmed with this rare sport.

“I will not undertake to describe the many joyous scenes of our country life, such as the harvesting, the May day and birthday festivals, or our Christmas frolics ; but one of these annual customs deserves a passing notice, and that is the ‘vendanges,’ or wine-making. It was usual in the month of September, according to the maturity of the grapes, to fix a day when our neighbors were all informed that *our* ‘vendanges’ would commence. When this day arrived, the peasants of all neighboring country seats flocked to La Castagne,

and all were diligently employed in the business of wine making. The women and a portion of the men sallied forth merrily into the vineyards with their baskets, and carefully gathered the grapes. As each basket was filled, it was brought in on their heads, balanced as only these peasants can balance their burden; and there was an actual emulation as to which could most frequently return with his or her basket filled. Another portion of the men would be occupied in pressing, or rather *trampling* the grapes. Barefooted, and their trousers rolled up, they danced about in a large reservoir, which was the receptacle of the contents of each basket as it successively arrived; and the gleeful song kept time with the wine-stained legs, as the juice of the grape flowed beneath the tuneful tramp. Often have I joined this merry party, and, barefooted, helped to express the wine. The advantage of using feet is, that they yield to the stem and seeds, and the grape only is crushed, without their bitterness mixing with the pure juice. From this reservoir the wine is constantly carried into large *cuves*, where it undergoes fermentation, and is in time further prepared for the table. This gay scene with us usually occupied three days, and all who came to assist were entertained with a plentiful collation, served on long tables on the green lawn, where the day was closed with the happy peasants' dance, the fiddler being a regular attendant at each 'vendange.' As the neighboring estates each had in turn their festival, our peasants went to assist them, and were treated with the same joyful cheer till the round was completed.

"Next to La Castagne, some of our pleasantest reminiscences are of St. Foy, a small fortified town, encircled by a high wall, with its ancient cathedral, and its anti-

quated college, and situated on the romantic banks of the limpid Dordogne."

We had numerous pets at La Castagne, and those I can well remember. The ones most prized by me chanced not to be of a very poetical class — no other than certain young families of guinea pigs, whose number had an indefinite increase. Fortunately there were deaths now and then amongst them; and I have a very distinct recollection of the funeral obsequies paid to these beloved favorites. We were then five brothers and seven sisters. We used to form ourselves into a procession of mourners. Two of the boys carried on their shoulders a rude box for a coffin, containing the dead body of the favorite covered with a white pall, over which were strewed fresh flowers. The procession was headed by our third brother, Charles, who carried a huge bell, which he tolled with considerable violence as the procession moved on. At the grave the box was placed in the earth, and the bell toller, who was quite celebrated amongst us for his powers of oratory, delivered a flowery and moving address, to which we listened with profound attention, making all due efforts to shed tears at the proper places. The earth was then shovelled in, and we all ran off to play, or perhaps to look forward with some excitement to the decease of the next favorite.

We had one custom among us — I presume of French origin — which has also left a deep impression. On the anniversary of the birthday of our parents, we all assembled early in the morning to await their entrance into the breakfast room. Every child had some little *cadeau* to offer. The elder ones generally presented scrolls containing verses, — sometimes copied, sometimes

original, — and the younger ones bouquets of violets. The verses were inscribed on large sheets of paper, surrounded by drawings of wreaths of flowers and other devices, and were styled “*les compliments*.” When our parents appeared, we went up to them in turn, according to our ages, proudly offering our “*compliments*,” and receiving kisses and words of encouragement in return — praises which made that day a jubilee. I remember, when I could not have been more than five years old, growing very weary in the effort to copy verses in a large, round hand, to be presented on one of these birthday anniversaries. After a deal of blotting and scratching, and beginning anew, they were finished at last. I can see them now as they lay before me, written on a huge sheet, nicely rolled up and tied with gay ribbons, ready to be offered. Baby, almost, as I was, I experienced a sensation of pride and delight which has not often been surpassed in after years.

The performance of private plays seems to have been the favorite amusement of my elder sisters and brothers. I can only remember one of these occasions — the one on which I made my own *début*. The play represented was Othello, translated into French. My eldest sister enacted Desdemona; my eldest brother Othello; the second sister Emilia; the second brother Cassio, doubling the part with that of the uncle; the third brother Iago, doubling the part with that of the judge. The other brothers and sisters filled the remaining characters. In the French version, however, the *dramatis personæ* are not the same as in the Othello of Shakspeare. The variations from the original text are, in some instances, of the most comical nature.

A difficulty occurred about the judges in the trial

scene. Our dramatic corps proved insufficient to furnish judges. To supply this vacancy, the four younger children were summoned, dressed in red gowns and white wigs, made to sit on high benches, and instructed to pay great attention, and not to laugh. Of these children I was the youngest; and at five years old, in the sedate and solemn character of a judge, upon a mimic stage, I made my first appearance in that profession of which it was the permission of divine Providence that I should one day in reality become a member.

The festivities of that night were in honor of my father's birthday. The evening commenced with the christening of the youngest child. The play succeeded, and a ball closed the night, or rather ushered in the morning. On the same night a similar version of Othello was enacted at the Theatre Royal by Lafont the successor of the great Talma. One of our friends attended both representations. The Iago of our troupe confidently asked this gentleman whether the performance at the Theatre Royal at all approached our home delineations. The exact answer returned is not on record; but the ambitious young questioner presumed that there *could* be but *one* reply.

I cannot recollect the performances of my elder brothers and sisters, but I have heard that they displayed remarkable dramatic talent. This talent does not appear to have been inherited. My father merely appreciated theatrical performances without having a passion for them; and my beloved mother was brought up in a school too rigid to inspire any particular love for the stage. She enjoyed a good play in common with other persons of cultivation and taste; but never joined in any private performance, nor appeared very fre-

quently at a public. I have often tried to discover the source whence sprang the power of representation which seems to run through one branch of the family, but without success; nor can my father throw any light upon the subject.

Before leaving France, the family removed to Bourdeaux. But I can scarcely call to mind that city. I only remember the public gardens where we used to play; the deep, grass-covered hollow in their centre, called *le bassin*, around which we daily danced, in a ring, with a host of little French children; and I recollect some of our merry French games, but nothing else.

I was in my seventh year when we embarked from Bourdeaux for New York in the ship Brandt. Even at this day I cannot think of that dreadful voyage without a shudder. The terrible crash with which we were early one morning waked from sleep still sounds in my ears. The ship was pitching so violently that we children could scarcely hold ourselves in our berths. One little sister was thrown out and bruised against the great dinner table. The water was pouring down the companion way, and threatening to flood the whole cabin.

My brother Charles, at my earnest request, furnishes me with his recollections of the voyage and shipwreck, which I insert:—

“We left St. Foy to join the remainder of the family on our return to America. We sailed from Bourdeaux in the ship Brandt, captain Steinaur; and on the 17th September we left the river, and passed the ‘Tour de Cordovan,’ at the mouth of the Gironde, a place we had before visited in some of our summer excursions to the sea shore. The ‘Tour de Cordovan’ is built on a rock

far out in the sea, and for six months of the year is often unapproachable, on account of the boisterous waves that wash its base: the family living there, and who have charge of the revolving light, have then no communication with the external world for a length of time. In summer the rock is dry, and is often visited. The building, which is of square stone, was erected during the reign of Henri IV., and is four hundred feet above the level of the sea: the lower part contains apartments for every sort of artisanship; and a spiral stairway of three hundred and sixty-five steps, relieved at intervals by large Gothic chambers, conducts to the top, where one can examine the curious mechanism of a revolving light of intense brilliancy, that sends its warning for many and many a league to the adventurous mariner in that fearful Bay of Biscay. On one side the view extends far over the fertile valley of the Gironde, whilst on the other it reaches only the infinite blue of this turbulent bay.

“We had the usual quantity of storms and boisterous weather in making our way out of the Bay of Biscay. The Brandt was a good ship, though perhaps too deeply laden. There was a large saloon on the after deck, where all our meals were served, and which was our social hall. Our family on board consisted of our parents, seven sisters, (one of whom was married,) and three brothers. There were, besides these, other passengers.

“On the afternoon of the 30th September, being then nearly off the Western Islands, we experienced a tremendous gale from the north-west. That evening we were all assembled in the saloon for the last time. All night the storm continued with increasing violence. On



the 1st of October, our two younger brothers, (one ten, the other twelve years of age,) who slept in the state room with me, having, like all on board, spent a restless night, rose at dawn of day, and went on deck. The officer on duty bade them not remain there; and they went into the saloon, where it was thought there was at least safety.

“At about half past six there was a terrible, deafening crash; the sound of which, breaking upon drowsy ears, still reverberates in my mind. The vessel had been struck on the larboard bow by a tremendous wave, which, crossing her from stem to stern, rent up every thing, and completely swept our decks, whilst it threw the ship with her beam ends in the sea. The caboose, longboat, and water casks, cables, and every thing amidships, her bulwarks, and every particle of the saloon, were violently shattered and washed away, and the deck around the companion way and forecastle hatch completely torn up, making the whole ship a wreck indeed. The masts alone were uninjured. Fortunately she soon righted.\*

“My first thought was, of course, for my brothers, knowing that they had gone on deck; and as soon as possible, I rushed, half clad, up the companion way. Here a scene of desolation presented itself that I should in vain attempt to describe. The naked decks, with nothing but the masts standing, the rigging flying in

\* “To give some idea of how completely the vessel was thrown down, I will mention that a stack of hay that was on deck was found, when the ship righted, in the main yard, having been picked up out of the sea; and another circumstance: one of our sisters, who slept in a square state room on the windward side, was thrown from her berth into that of the sister opposite, and without injury.”

every direction, the bulwarks destroyed, and presenting no barrier to the sea, which, with every roll of the vessel, washed over the deck and down into the cabin; then the waves, mountain high, and foaming with fury, that seemed every moment to threaten destruction; whilst the gusty blasts, howling through the rigging, were a fit dirge for the impending fate.

“I could not reach the deck. Struck with awe and wonder, I looked around for some living being to tell me of my brothers. Too soon, alas! the sad tale was revealed. A sturdy seaman, (our second mate,) whose honest heart had made him a favorite with us, was seen cramped to the rigging, about midships, and drawing something out of the sea. Presently our youngest brother appeared, and as the mate reached me, and placed his almost inanimate form in my arms, he pointed astern, and said, ‘The other is lost!’ I looked, and on a crested billow, fast receding, and already far from us, I caught a momentary glimpse — the last of poor Gabriel! I subsequently learned from the mate, that, when the vessel first righted, he saw Gabriel in the sea, having hold of a fragment of the jollyboat. He seized a rope and threw it to him. The boy let go his boat, and swam to the rope; but it sank before he could catch it. He then turned to his boat again, and was beyond the reach of assistance before any could be rendered. The mate then saw the youngest brother, also overboard, and clinging to the main sheet, which was hanging over the side, every roll of the vessel taking him under water. His effort to save him was successful, though to loosen his hold he had much difficulty.

“Besides these, five men were washed overboard, but were all providentially saved by the effects of a counter

wave, and but two seriously injured; one had broken his leg.

“A sad duty had now devolved upon me, as I appeared below with the half-drowned boy in my arms, and met the affrighted members of the family, who by this time had collected in the main cabin. To their anxious inquiries, and to those of a distressed mother, it was my painful task to repeat the awful words of the brave sailor, ‘The other is lost!’ I cannot depict the anguish of that moment: though our cabin was deluged with water, and threatening danger seemed each instant about to hurry us all into eternity, one loud lamentation for him, who perhaps had only for a brief period ‘gone before,’ escaped every bosom, and sorrow absorbed the sense of peril. But all thoughts now turned to the fond mother, whose agonized heart more keenly than any other felt this poignant loss.

‘Her big swol’n grief surpassed  
The power of utterance; she stood aghast;  
Nor had she speech, nor tears to give relief;  
Excess of woe suppressed the rising grief.’

“Throughout the day the storm continued with unabated fury. Our disabled vessel lay to, the sport of every wave. For a while we scudded. As night set in, she was again struck by an immense sea, which, taking her in the stern, stove in our dead lights, and deluged the cabin again; whilst on deck it severely injured several persons, almost killing the helmsman, beside breaking the wheel. The ship was again hove to; and through that long night, and part of the next day, each hour appearing more fearful than the last, wind and wave seemed to contend with undiminished violence as

to which should strike the fatal blow that would end our struggles and completely demolish our already unsafe vessel.

“At-length, after forty-eight hours’ continuance, the storm abated. Once more a bright sun appeared, and hope smiled upon us through its cheering rays. Some time was spent in such repairs as could be made, and it was decided, the wind being westerly, that we should put back for the nearest port in Europe. All our live stock and fresh provisions being washed away with the entire supply of cooking utensils, it was fortunate that, among the private stores in the cabin, we had a quantity of French conserves, *pâtés de perigord, de foie gras*, and so forth; but these luxuries became exceedingly distasteful when they constituted our chief food for several days. On the fifth day we encountered a craft that supplied us with some bread and a barrel of potatoes, as well as an iron kettle. Never shall I forget the delightful relish that those *potatoes* proved to have after we had remained so long without the means of cooking any thing.

“The wind being favorable as we entered the British Channel, we continued our course, and reached Havre on the 9th October. The Brandt was reported at Havre, and the anxious surprise of our elder brother, who was residing there, soon brought him on board. The meeting with an afflicted mother opened afresh her lacerated heart. No word was spoken; our dismantled ship and the one missing form too plainly told the sad tale.

“The Brandt was necessarily abandoned, and on the 15th October we sailed for New York in the packet ship ‘Queen Mab.’ We had a long passage of forty days,

with much boisterous weather ; but nothing worthy of particular note occurred, save the loss of one of our crew.

“It was ere the dawn of day ; a western gale had partly subsided, and the wind came only in gusts : two men were ordered to let out a reef in the spanker — one of them, a sailor whose fine appearance and handsome, happy countenance had often attracted the attention of the passengers, was on the extreme end of the boom, when it was suddenly jerked by a fitful blast so violently as to throw both men off, the one at the end falling into the sea. Immediately the cry ran through the ship, ‘ All hands ahoy — a man overboard ! ’ and, ringing through the cabin, sent a thrill in every heart that made each slumberer leap to his feet. The captain was quickly on deck, and many half-clad passengers, rushing from their berths, followed him.

“The ship was hove to as rapidly as possible, and the mate, with two seamen, jumped into the stern boat. There was no hesitation ; the word was given, ‘ Let go,’ and the frail bark struck the sea. It was a noble sight to see these three men, perilling their own lives in a rough sea to try to save a fellow-creature. They plied their oars in the wake of the ship, and soon were out of sight.

“Silently and anxiously we watched for them for upwards of an hour. At last, when morn began to ‘ wave her purple wings,’ we descried the boat returning. As soon as they were within sound, they were hailed by the captain with an ‘ All well ? ’ Breathlessly we listened for a reply ; a mournful ‘ No ! ’ was echoed back ; and as the brave fellows ascended the deck, an emotion of sympathy was felt for their noble daring, and a silent

tear moistened the eye for the fate of their former companion."

New York was in future to be our permanent abode. For a time every thing seemed strange to the younger children. We could understand but very little English; and American children, with whom we could not converse, seemed dull companions in comparison with our merry little playmates of *Les Jardins Publiques*. My thoughts were always wandering back to the pleasant places we had left, and I longed to exchange the red-brick walls for green trees and beautiful gardens. "Shall we never return?" "Must we live here always?" were questions often asked with childish eagerness, but never satisfactorily answered.

✓ Then came school days, with their busy round of joys and cares — joys less perfect than those of after years, and cares that press as heavily on the child's unstrengthened heart as life cares on that of matured but courageous womanhood. So at least I thought, and still think. Soon after our arrival in New York, we were placed at Mrs. Okill's boarding school — and there I appeared for the second time on a mimic stage. It was in a little French play, — I do not even recollect its name, — performed, after a public examination of the scholars, for the amusement of the parents and guardians. My sister Matilda and I were intrusted with important parts, and won many praises.

For a long period I did not entirely recover from the consequences of the sea voyage and its terrible excitements, and my school days were frequently interrupted by fits of illness. I was, however, permitted to read as much as I chose, and availed myself amply of the privilege. I read any thing and every thing that I could

find. Of poetry I was never tired, and at ten years old I had read the whole of Shakspeare's plays many times over. My reading was not guided—I was allowed to take any book that I chose, French or English, from my father's library. When I look back upon some of the works which I perused with avidity at that early age, I can hardly believe it possible that a child could have waded through them, or culled out meaning enough to render the subjects interesting. I amused myself by writing also, and *fancied* that I wrote poetry, because I made the ends of the lines rhyme. Every marriage, or birth, or death, or exciting circumstance that occurred in the family invariably furnished me with a subject. All my deeper feelings spontaneously expressed themselves in verse. I used to sit for hours stringing doggerel together, and longing to show it to somebody who would be sure to say that the verses were very beautiful. I seldom had courage to exhibit these infantile productions, but laid little plots to secure their being seen. Sometimes I would leave a copy of verses on the floor in some of my brothers' rooms, or on the nursery mantelpiece, or write them on the walls in the garden, which at one period were covered over with rhymes. I seldom got praised for any of these effusions, and I doubt whether they deserved any praise; though I, at the time, imagined them very fine. One day I let fall a little "poem"—*as I designated it*—in the room of one of my brothers, and soon after perceived him coming out of his apartment with the paper in his hand. He went down stairs, and, unperceived, I stole softly after him. When he entered the drawing room, where my father was sitting, I dropped down on the last step, with my heart beating so painfully that I could scarcely

breathe. I could hear him say, "Just read this, papa; it is some of Anna's nonsense."

I sat still, too much agitated to move, but not able to overhear what passed, until the words came to me in my father's voice, "I wish you would call her."

I sprang up to betake myself to flight; but my brother had opened the door before I could disappear. I was summoned. I entered the room like a culprit who had been guilty of some heavier crime than that of murdering English and perpetrating bad poetry.

"Did you write these lines yourself?" inquired my father, in his usual kind tone.

"Yes," I answered.

"Are you sure that nobody helped you? Are you sure that you did not get them out of some book?"

I replied, indignantly, that they were my own. I was beginning to be elated by the idea that probably I *had* produced something wonderful, after all.

"They are not very good grammar," said my father; "but they are quite pretty, for all that. Who knows what my little chicken may turn out one of these days?" he added, caressing me.

These were the first words of praise that had ever been bestowed upon what I wrote. I felt inclined to cry for joy; but my brother took the lines, and began pointing out the flagrant mistakes in metre, in grammar, in sense; and I snatched the paper out of his hand and ran away. My childish heart was full of conflicting emotions—delight at my father's approval—vexation with my brother—shame at my own ignorance in writing so incorrectly. For a long period after that I kept every thing I wrote carefully locked up, and made a bonfire when my store accumulated beyond bounds.



At school I was too wild, too “ungovernably gay,” to ✓  
gain the highest honors. I learned with great rapidity  
any thing I fancied; but the good marks I got for my  
studies were too often counterbalanced by bad marks  
received for talking, making the other girls laugh, or  
disobeying rules. I and one of my younger sisters were  
constantly convicted of being ringleaders in all mis-  
chief which had merriment for its end. I was general-  
ly at the head, or very near the head, of classes for  
reading, recitation of poetry, mythology, history, physi-  
ology, mental philosophy, &c., but as invariably at the  
foot of grammar, arithmetic, algebra. The multiplica-  
tion table I never succeeded in learning. Sums in the  
rule of three, and French verbs, were my childhood’s  
miseries. I considered them invented for my own par-  
ticular torment. I got into the more deep disgrace on  
these points because I was tolerably bright in other re-  
spects.

During a portion of our school-day probation, two  
sisters and I were placed at boarding school in New Ro-  
chelle. There I was really unhappy. I had but one  
source of consolation and delight — the little garden  
which I was permitted to plant and call my own. We  
each were given a bit of ground about four feet square,  
and allowed to work there a short time every day.  
These are the only happy hours I can remember  
amongst the many lonely and miserable ones that made  
up the year. Nor were these miseries imaginary. We  
were harshly treated — punished for the slightest in-  
fringement of most severe rules — inadequately fed  
— and deprived of all pleasures but a formal walk  
every afternoon, a short “intermission” twice a day, (at  
which we were forbidden to make any noise,) and the

much-prized and delightful garden digging. When I was twelve years old, we were summoned home. Our father's house seemed paradise, indeed, from the contrast. We once more became day scholars in good schools, and merry as uncaged linnets.

Our favorite amusement continued to be the enacting of plays and reciting poetical dialogues. I soon became stage manager and director of all these dramatic performances, and was called upon to write fresh scenes, add in new characters, or alter the *dénouements*, according to the fancies of our whimsical little corps. Sometimes we invented the plots of these plays, — or selected them from incidents in history, — chose characters, dressed for them, and *improvised* the dialogues and the scenes during performance. We did not care particularly for audiences — they generally consisted of our schoolmates or any accidental visitors, and very often we had no audience at all. These plays merely took the place of other childish games, and afforded an intellectual excitement as well as amusement.

I was fourteen years old when I conceived the project of preparing some grand celebration in honor of our father's birthday. We would enact a standard play — a *real* play. It should be studied and produced with great care. The friends of our elder sisters and our parents should be invited as well as our own. For once, we would act before *grown-up people*, and on a great occasion. The play selected — because it required no scenery, and only such characters as we could readily fill, with the assistance of some school friends — was Voltaire's *Alzire*, translated into English. All our male characters were represented by young girls, for our brothers had passed the days when they could have

been persuaded to wear the sock and buskin amongst juveniles. Our parents would not have allowed us to supply their places with any but those of our own sex.

A great difficulty arose in procuring costumes for the Spanish and Moorish heroes — a difficulty which came near ruining our project. Mr. Simpson, the excellent and gentlemanly manager of the Park Theatre, with his delightful family, lived opposite. We had no acquaintance with them beyond bowing to the children when we met in the street. It was proposed, however, that three or four of the most confident of our number should pay a visit to Mrs. Simpson, and beg her to use her influence with her husband to lend us certain costumes from the wardrobe of the theatre. Mrs. Simpson received us very kindly. I was made spokesman on the occasion, and, but for her sweet face and gentle manners, should have found some difficulty in making known the wishes of our youthful committee. Evidently much amused at our enthusiasm, she promised that we should have the dresses. In return, we invited her children to be present at the performance.

We had many, a great many, rehearsals, some before our parents and elder sisters, who, after witnessing one of these, consented to invite their friends. When the play concluded, the evening was to end with a ball. The performance was to take place in the back drawing room. To supply the place of scenery, it was hung round with crimson curtains, through which we were to make our entrances and exeunts. The audience were to sit in rows in the front drawing room. We had a drop curtain and a prompter, who stood ready with his book and bell (or rather *her* book and bell, for she was a young lady) to mark the division of the acts by the

falling of the curtain. Of course, there could be no change of scene. The audience were supposed courteously to *imagine* when we were talking by moonlight in a wood, or by torchlight in a prison, or by daylight in a lady's boudoir.

The eventful evening so anxiously expected by our little troupe came, and with it a host of visitors. They were presented with neatly-written programmes at the door, and seated in a manner to allow the old people and children a close proximity to the stage. A prologue had been written by a talented friend, (Miss Anna L. Putnam, sister of the publisher,) to be spoken by our youngest little sister Julia, then scarcely four years old. She was my pupil, and I had cause to be proud of her. I think I was more anxious that she should acquit herself brilliantly than that I should perform my own part with *éclat*. Her talent for the stage, even at that age, was a marvel. She did not speak with parrot-like precision, as though the words had been taught to her; but uttered them as though she comprehended them, knew their full value, and gave them a meaning of her own.

The curtain rose, and she came tripping forward, unshadowed by the touch of fear — a round, rosy, lovely child, with a look full of intellect, and a grace which no art could teach. On her fair, curling hair we had placed a wreath of rosebuds and leaves; and she wore a little white dress, looped up with pink ribbons. Her recitation of the prologue seemed to me perfection; and those who were better judges, and still remember it, say that no poem could have been more effectively delivered. Her presence of mind must have been something remarkable, for, the curtain not falling at the right moment, she prettily repeated over the last lines, kissing

her hand and courtesying three or four times as she backed up the stage with the knowledge of a veteran artist. This had not been taught to her. As soon as we could catch her in our arms, she was almost smothered with kisses; but she was a calm, self-possessed little creature, free from all vanity, and did not appear in the least excited. She had played her part well, and only wanted to escape into the drawing room, to sit on her mother's knee and watch the others perform.

The play went off with great *éclat*, as the tears of the audience, bestowed as freely as their applause, amply testified. I enacted the part of Alzire, and succeeded in losing my own identity in that of the heroine. My father came behind the scenes when the play was over, and his words of commendation sank deep in my heart. I wondered if I really deserved them, and if other people would say the same. Our stage dresses were quickly laid aside for ball costume, and the evening ended with dancing and great hilarity.

Strange to say, up to this period I had visited a theatre but once, and that only a few weeks before our birthday *fête*. For some years our parents and their children had all attended the church of Dr. E——n, now Bishop E——n. I went to Sunday school with my sisters twice every Sunday — at first as pupil, and then as teacher. I had a species of enthusiastic admiration and reverence for Bishop E——n. I loved to see him enter the Sunday school; I loved to hear him in the pulpit; and was happier all day if he accidentally bestowed upon me a passing word. He disapproved of theatres; he pronounced them the “abodes of sin and wickedness.” It never occurred to me to inquire what he *really knew* of theatres; but I trusted implicitly

in his *supposed* information. I determined that I never would enter such a dreadful place. My sisters went now and then with our father ; but, in spite of my decided passion for plays and for acting, the thought of the imaginary monsters of evil, which I was certainly to behold, kept me away.

Fanny Kemble was then taking her farewell of the stage. Her name was on every body's lips ; her praises echoed from all sides. I read critiques upon her acting in the papers, and heard her talked of as a most devoted daughter and truly excellent woman. I could not help longing to see her ; but the old objections were strong within me, and I was afraid of being laughed at if I confessed that my interest in the woman made me willing to enter such a place, as I supposed a theatre to be, to see the actress. Her last engagement was drawing to a close. My sisters had witnessed several of her performances, and constantly mentioned them with delight.

One morning my father overtook us as we were walking to school. He accosted my elder sister with, "I am going to take seats to see Fanny Kemble to night in the Hunchback. Would you like to go?"

She, of course, answered in the affirmative. I looked at my father, longing for him to ask me ; but I had too often cried down the theatre with childish violence, and quoted Dr. E——n as authority. I dared not request that my father would take me.

Just as he was leaving us, he said, carelessly, "And so you, Anna, are *never* going?"

I could not resist the temptation, and answered, in a faltering voice, "I *should* like to see Fanny Kemble just *once*."

"O, you have changed your mind? Very well; I will take a seat for you to-night," was his reply.

That day few were the studies to which I attended. I could think of nothing but the theatre, and do nothing but long for evening to come. It did come at last, after a day that seemed like a week, and to the theatre we went. When we entered the boxes, my first sensation was of bewilderment at the crowd, the lights, the music, the sea of expectant faces beneath us in the pit, and mounting in waves around us and above us. Yet I did not quite forget that there must be some "sin and wickedness" which I could not comprehend, and I believe I even asked my father to have the goodness to point out the "harm." He might have told me, what I learned in after years, that the "harm" consisted in the perversion of good to evil; in abuses which had nothing to do with the drama itself; in the poison which evil minds, like spiders, draw from the rose whence the bee sucks but honey. ✓

The curtain ascended, and I was all eyes and ears. Fanny Kemble appeared in the second scene, and I thought I had never beheld any creature so perfectly bewitching. The tones of her voice were richest music, and her dark, flashing eyes seemed to penetrate my very soul. Her "Clifford, why don't you speak to me?" made me start from my seat; and her "Do it!" to Master Walter, electrified me, as indeed it did the whole audience. The play was a reality from beginning to end, and I laughed and wept immoderately.

After the drama, the two Misses Wheatley danced a *pas de deux*; and though I have since beheld the finest European ballet dancers, none ever made the delightful impressions that those chastely-graceful girls left upon

my mind. I little thought that in after years I should have the pleasure of becoming acquainted with them; no longer children, but most refined and accomplished ladies, exemplary wives, — one of them a mother, — and both gracing the high sphere in which they move. Their stage garments have long been laid aside; but the stage needs no better defence than the blameless lives of these two admirable and lovely women and their mother.

All my prejudices against the theatre melted “into thin air” with this first night; but I went very seldom, not more than three or four times, I think, while I remained at school.



## CHAPTER II.

*My eldest Sister. — First Acquaintance with Mr. Mowatt. — Singular Impressions. — Sudden Project of educating a Child for a Wife. — Madam Chegaray's School. — Alzire. — Attempt at an Offer frustrated. — The first Love Letter. — A Refusal and a Consent. — My Father's Stipulations. — A Wedding Party without a Bride. — Preparations for the Performance of the Drama of the Mourning Bride. — Effect of a Lover's Melancholy. — A Promise. — The Confidant. — Novel Mode of procuring and preparing a bridal Wardrobe. — Adventures. — Refusal of three Clergymen to perform the Ceremony. — A runaway Wedding. — Rencontre with a Father. — A Child keeps a Secret. — A Farewell. — Breaking the News. — "The Bride's Flower." — The Pardon. — Bridal Celebration.*

I MUST go back to my thirteenth year, to relate one of the most important incidents of my life, the one which was to govern my whole future existence. My eldest sister Charlotte, with her two little children, passed a summer at Rockaway, for the enjoyment of sea bathing. Among the guests at Rock Hall was James Mowatt, of New York, a young barrister of education and fortune. He was much charmed with my sister, imagining her to be a youthful widow. This mistake she never discovered until his admiration was expressed in open terms. When informed that he was addressing a married woman, his chagrin was so great that she laughingly consoled him by saying, "O, I have plenty of young sisters at home, and one of them very much resembles me. Call upon me in New York, and I will make you acquainted with her."

In a few weeks she returned to the city. Mr. Mowatt made no delay in paying his respects. The school, which four of us children attended, was directly opposite our residence. While we were in the midst of our studies one day, a messenger came to say that the eldest of the schoolgirl sisters must come home. She was the one that strikingly resembled our sister Charlotte. I asked the servant if any thing had happened. She replied, "No; that there was only a gentleman in the drawing room, who entreated that my sister might be sent for." I had heard Mr. Mowatt much talked of in the family, and felt a childish curiosity to see him. Without permission, I accompanied my sister home, and watched her while her beautiful hair was recurled, and her schooldress laid aside for a more becoming attire. She was ushered into the drawing room; and I, of course, dared not enter.

After waiting about half an hour, I remembered that I had received no permission to leave school, and, certain visions of black marks rising up before me, I thought it judicious to return. But to go back without having seen this much-talked-of beau—I could not do that. I would enter the drawing room on some pretext. After hesitating a while, I opened the door, ran across the room, threw down my satchel of school books upon the centre table,—as though that must be their proper place,—gave one look towards the sofa, and ran out again.

"Who is that?" I heard the gentleman exclaim.

"Only one of the children from the nursery," answered my eldest sister.

"Do call her back," he urged.

My sister came to the door and called out, as I was

flying up stairs, tolerably frightened at what I had done, "Anna, Anna, come back and speak to Mr. Mowatt!"

"I don't care for Mr. Mowatt!" was the saucy reply that reached his ears; and away I went.

A servant was sent to summon me, but I refused to comply. I waited until I heard the gentleman take his leave, then hurried down stairs to return to school. Mr. Mowatt was standing at the foot of the street door steps, and placed himself in front of me with extended arms. There was no retreat, and he kept me prisoner for some time. I was, indeed, —

"Wayward, bold, and wild,  
A self-willed imp, a grandam's child;  
And half a plague, and half a jest,  
Was still endured, beloved, caressed," —

and I answered his many questions with saucy, merry frankness, every now and then imploring to be freed. Finding he would not consent, I watched my opportunity, suddenly slipped beneath his arm, and ran across the street to school. I well remember the expression of his face as I looked back, laughing heartily at the astonishment of my discomfited jailer.

I have very many times heard Mr. Mowatt describe this first interview to his friends, particularly to Mary Howitt, of London, and I only regret that I cannot convey his impressions in the same language. Soon after he left the house, he encountered an intimate acquaintance. The subject turned upon courtship and matrimony. His friend asked him how long he intended to remain a bachelor.

"Not long," he replied, "if a little girl whom I saw to-day would only grow up." He then related what

had taken place, and added, emphatically, "I feel as though I should never marry unless I marry that child."

I have often heard him repeat his having used these words, and quote in connection with them Moore's beautiful lines —

"O, there are looks and tones that dart  
An instant sunshine through the heart,  
As though the soul that moment caught  
Some object it through life had sought."

From that moment he conceived the project of educating me to suit his own views — of gaining my affections, and, the instant I was old enough to be considered marriageable, of taking me to his own home — his child-wife. His visits to the family became very frequent. He always inquired for me; but I was generally at school, or studying my lessons, or had gone to bed; and he was constantly frustrated in his desire to see me. But his perseverance comprehended no discouragement. Our school was now changed — we were placed at Madame Chegaray's, to be instructed in the higher branches of education. On our way to school (which was about half a mile distant from our home) we regularly encountered Mr. Mowatt. He would walk beside me, carry my books and slate, and question me about my studies. Sometimes he made them clearer to me; and very soon, under the stimulus of his suggestions, my ambition to become an accomplished scholar was aroused. Now and then I would propose to my sisters, for mischief, to take a different road, that he might miss us; but after a couple of days he discovered the stragem, and stationed one of his clerks to watch which

street we took. He was thus instantly apprised if we were going different ways.

I thought it very grand to have so devoted a lover, and played the tyrant at thirteen and fourteen to my heart's content. Yet I owed almost entirely to Mr. Mowatt the rapid progress which I made in my studies at these ages. He directed my reading, furnished me with books, examined all my compositions, and (what I thought most delightful of all) supplied me with an endless quantity of flowers, as a species of reward for my industry.

He was present at my performance of *Alzire*, and was naturally the most enthusiastic where all were enthusiastic. The next morning he determined to offer himself, although I was not yet fifteen. It was Saturday, and there was no school. He called very early, and asked particularly for me. While my sisters were making their toilets, I hastened to the parlor in my morning dress. I was eager to listen to praises of the past night's efforts. But I was not more disappointed than astonished when the gentleman awaiting me commenced a serious conversation, without making the slightest allusion to the play. I only comprehended enough to be alarmed. I did not reply, but, jumping up, called to my sister Charlotte to come down stairs quickly. She did so, inquiring what was the matter. Of course, this was an *unanswerable* question, and the situation of two of the parties concerned must have been particularly ludicrous.

When Mr. Mowatt left, I told her what had passed. She laughed, and said he was making sport of me, because I was such a forward child. But the sport proved earnest, and what I refused to listen to that day

was conveyed to me by letter the next. A school-girl of fourteen pondering over a love letter — an offer of marriage from a man many years her senior. It was in itself an amusing situation; yet I found it a painful one. I carried the important document to one of my sisters, (the next to the eldest,) and, making her promise secrecy, placed the letter in her hands. She read it without comment.

“Well, and what are you going to do?” she inquired, at its conclusion.

“Get you to help me to write an answer, and tell him I am too young to marry any body, and say something about *friendship*, and all that sort of thing — because I do like him very much.”

She told me I must write the letter myself, and she would correct it — she could do nothing more. I went to the nursery, for, ludicrous as it sounds, I still belonged to the *nursery* — slept there, and there kept my books and writing materials; and to the nursery I took my love letter. I began an answer, and tore it up — and began another, and another; and at last succeeded in writing a page of nonsense, which I thought very good sense. I took it to my sister to read. She pronounced that it would do; and the letter was sent by post.

Its effect, however, was very different from what we anticipated. Mr. Mowatt merely laughed at what he considered girlish shyness. He increased, rather than diminished, the number of his visits, and assumed the bearing of an accepted, instead of a rejected, lover. This went on for some time, and he took frequent opportunities of assuring me that he could never be made to comprehend the meaning of the word “No.” It was

a safe way to woo a child, and when I was within a few weeks of fifteen, the "No" was forgotten, and a "Yes" had taken its place.

My father's consent was asked. He could find no objection to Mr. Mowatt, and made my extreme youth the only barrier. He replied, that, if we both remained of the same mind until I was seventeen, he would give his sanction to our union. Meantime, Mr. Mowatt might continue his visits, and see me as often as any other gentleman.

This answer did not satisfy a lover whose principal object was to direct the whole education of the girl he married. But my father resisted all entreaties to give any other; especially as I was the most sickly of his children, and greatly needed a mother's care.

At fifteen I left school, and took drawing and music lessons at home, only studying whatever Mr. Mowatt requested. The next winter I was, with an elder sister, to be introduced into society. This was his particular dread, and he made up his mind that I should become his wife before that winter arrived. For six months his arguments to persuade me to leave my father's house were used in vain. Once I very nearly consented, and upon that half consent he built such confident hopes that the next morning all arrangements were made, at the house of his sister-in-law, for the performance of the nuptial ceremony. The necessary witnesses were assembled, and a carriage stood at the door to be despatched for the clergyman the moment I arrived. A young friend, who was to act as bridesmaid, came for me; but, in spite of her persuasions and remonstrances, she had to return alone, and dismiss the expectant bridal party.

September came, and the ball season was shortly to commence. A party was to be given again this year in honor of my father's birthday, October 17, and we were to enact another play. The Mourning Bride was selected; but there being no character in which the talents of our gifted little sister Julia could be displayed, I was called upon to write a part. The only way I could devise was to furnish Queen Zara with a child, which child certainly proved a most wise, energetic, and talkative personage. The author would, I fancy, have been somewhat astonished and amused at the novel introduction.

For weeks scarcely any thing was talked of but costumes, and rehearsals, and scenic effects, and I found more pleasure than ever in conducting the stage management. I was to enact one of the two heroines. But our merry preparations were doomed to have a sudden interruption.

✓ I was pained to find that Mr. Mowatt no longer enjoyed his daily visits. He had become gloomy and discontented. He did not like the prospect of my entering into the gay world. He was convinced that, with my lively and excitable temperament, I would soon abandon my studies, and be wholly engrossed by social gayeties. I would be either lost to him, or so completely spoiled by too early an intercourse with society that his hopes concerning me could never be realized. Then he was no favorite with my family in general. They did not approve of my premature engagement. He was constantly subjected to slights and annoyances, to which a man of spirit could ill submit. He made me feel that he was unhappy, and daily becoming more so. More earnestly than ever he entreated me to become his wife



without further delay. I proposed that we should again attempt to obtain my father's sanction; but *that* Mr. Mowatt pronounced useless. For a long time I resisted his persuasions; but at last, when he had ceased to entreat me, I was so much grieved by the painfulness of his position, and the sight of his deepening melancholy, that of my own free will I gave him a promise that we should be united within a week.

Young as I was, and totally incapable of appreciating the importance of the step I was taking, I did not come to this determination without much suffering. But once having *resolved*, once having *promised*, nothing earthly could have shaken my resolution.

I did not dread my mother's anger, for I had never seen her lovely face distorted by passion. I had never heard her voice raised to an angry tone. I was sure of her tenderness, sure of her pardon. I had more fear of my father. But I was a favorite child; he had ever been most indulgent; he was seldom vexed with me; and I trusted to his love, and believed that he would easily be reconciled to me in spite of my disobedience. I was not marrying a man to whom he had refused his consent. I was only anticipating the two years during which he thought it necessary for me to wait. I readily argued myself into the belief that I should be forgiven.

The play for which we were nearly prepared, and the ball — those had to be given up. But I could not relinquish all thoughts of them without great regret at the disappointment which I knew my sisters would experience.

What was I to do? and who was to aid me? I could not leave my father's house alone. I could not be married without a *bridal wardrobe*. These were huge

barriers to be surmounted; but I went resolutely to work, determined to overcome them. I first confided my secret to a young nursery maid in the family, to whom I was much attached. I entreated her to accompany me when I left my home, and she consented. Then I went to my sister Matilda, with whom I was most intimate. After making her solemnly promise that she would not betray me, I told her that I intended to be married privately within a week. She was very much startled and overcome. She used arguments, entreaties, prayers, to dissuade me. She tried to convince me that I would not be forgiven; that I might repent through my whole future life the step that I was so rashly taking. My only answer was, "I have promised, and cannot break my word. You have promised, and cannot betray me."

Finding that I was not to be moved, she concluded that the wisest plan was to lend me every assistance in her power. Reluctantly and sadly, against her better judgment, she promised me her services.

We were sorely puzzled how to procure a wardrobe, and a wardrobe seemed to us indispensable. The first difficulty was how to obtain the money to purchase one, and the next how to have the materials made up when they were bought.

I had a few valuable diamonds and emeralds. I did not care for jewelry. Why should we not try to sell them? And my gold watch! We had heard of three golden balls hanging over shops where people went to pledge various articles for money. We would hunt out one of these places, and pawn the watch. We preferred that course to selling it, because it was an ornament I prized, and it could thus be reclaimed.

Early in the morning we started on our errand to raise funds. The diamonds and emeralds were easily disposed of at about one tenth part of their value. The jeweller who bought them scanned us very narrowly and asked a few questions. Indignant at his implied doubts, I looked him steadily in the face, and said, "They are my own, sir, and I can do with them what I like."

Whether he believed me or not, he was silenced. He took the jewels, and counted out the money. I have forgotten the exact sum, but we thought it a fortune. After this we strolled down the Bowery in search of a pawnbroker's. A sign of three golden balls soon told us that we had found one. Scarcely had we entered the gloomy-looking shop, the shutters of which were half closed, when we both became dreadfully frightened. We should have hastily retreated, but the Jewish-looking man who kept the place rose up from behind a dark counter and accosted us. I held out the watch, too much alarmed to utter a word.

"Do you want money on this?" he asked, gruffly.

"Yes."

"How much?"

"As much as possible."

The man laughed, and asked if thirty dollars would do. Any thing would have done that we might get away; and we both replied, "Yes, yes."

He examined the watch very closely, and said, "Come in here, young ladies," pointing to an inner apartment.

We hesitated. "Don't go! don't go!" whispered my sister, and we neither moved.

"Come in, that I may give you a receipt and you may sign your names in my book," continued the man.

He had the watch, and we felt that we must comply. Very tremulously, and holding each other's hands, we entered the room. My sister being the elder, he gave her a pen, and told her to write down her name and address. She stood a moment perfectly bewildered at the necessity of making known our names, and then handed the pen to me. I tried to assume a great deal of dignity, and seating myself at the table, wrote, "Mrs. James," which in a few days would be a portion of my name. I forget whether or not I invented a "local habitation" for the anticipated name.

The man read the name, looked at the little girl who wrote it, and seemed very much inclined to burst into a fit of laughter. He, however, restrained himself, gave us the money and a receipt for the watch, and we hurried out of his shop with far more rapid steps than we had entered.

All necessities for a wardrobe were next to be purchased. It was raining in torrents; we were very much fatigued, and, feeling quite rich, hired the first carriage that could be found. For several hours we drove about shopping as long as our money lasted, and filling the carriage with our purchases. Amongst other things, I insisted upon buying a large wax doll to comfort little Julia in my absence, and a huge basket full of sugar plums for the other children, which I hoped would have a similar consolatory effect. Rather juvenile "bridal purchases."

We could not drive home in the carriage without being questioned. We left our parcels at a confectioner's very near our house, dismissed the carriage, gave orders that the bundles should be sent to our number,

addressed to the nursery maid, who was to accompany me on my bridal expedition, and walked home.

The next question was, How could the newly-purchased wardrobe be made up? There was no resource but to make it ourselves, with the assistance of the nursery maid. But at what time could this be accomplished without our being seen? It must be at night — we must work instead of sleeping. My sister slept alone in a small room beneath the nursery, and there we proposed to meet. We arranged to retire early, and as soon as the house was quiet the nursery maid and I would steal cautiously to my sister's room, and we would sit up until daylight and sew. Another difficulty sprang up. My mother was in the habit of visiting the nursery once or twice every night and seeing that the children were well covered and rested quietly. If my little bed in the corner should be found empty, search would, of course, be made for me. But we were not baffled yet. We made a figure of rags, dressed it in my nightclothes, put a cap on the head, and turned the face to the wall, taking care that the shoulders were nicely covered. My mother would think I was sleeping, and not disturb me. The plot succeeded. Night after night, for five or six nights, we three sat up, cutting out, fitting, sewing, making our needles fly with a scarcely credible rapidity. We were too much excited to grow sleepy, and accomplished an amount of work which now seems wonderful. At daybreak we went on tiptoe to our beds, after carefully concealing the lay figure, that my weary limbs might take its place.

At length the 6th of October came — the day on which I had promised to be married. My slender ward-

robe was completed — all our arrangements made. The day dawned magnificently — every thing looked propitious. It might well be said of that day, as of the new life which it commenced, —

“ Her dawn  
Was bright with sunbeams, whence was drawn  
A sure prognostic that the day  
Would not unclouded pass away.”

There had been some difficulty in procuring a clergyman to perform the ceremony. Mr. Mowatt first applied to Bishop Onderdonk. But he knew my father well — he had children of his own — it was not a good example to set them — he preferred that some other clergyman should be selected. I desired that Dr. E——n, whose church I attended, and in whose Sunday school I had been a scholar for some years, and was then a teacher, should be asked. He also refused. A third refusal came from Dr. J——n. Mr. Mowatt, nothing daunted, then applied to the Rev. Mr. V——n, the French pastor. This gentleman's own had been a runaway marriage; therefore he *could not* object. He consented. The bridal party were requested to assemble at his house at ten o'clock.

My sister dressed me in a plain white cambric dress. My little straw bonnet chanced to be trimmed with white ribbons, and the veil and white gloves which we had purchased she carried rolled in her handkerchief. They were not to be put on till we were out of sight of the house. I kissed my father before he went out, but felt myself becoming so agitated, that it was well he was in haste and did not notice me. Just as I was opening the street door, my mother came into the entry, and I kissed her also. She remarked my white dress,

and asked if I were not too lightly clad for such cold weather. I answered that I felt quite warm, and she allowed me to depart.

My poor sister, I think, suffered even more than I did; the blame was all to fall on her. She had done her utmost to dissuade me, and now had to assist in depriving herself of a beloved companion; for, being next to each other in age, we were very closely united in affection. I could not thank her at the time, but her unselfishness touched me deeply.

We left the house, and, turning the first corner, she threw the bridal veil over my bonnet, gave me the white gloves, and begged me to try and look composed before I met Mr. Mowatt and his friends.

Wonderfully composed I was. Of the future I did not even think; my only grief was at leaving my parents, my sisters, my home — leaving the love “which had still been true,” for the “love which was untried and new.” What could a girl of fifteen know of the sacred duties of a wife? With what eyes could she contemplate the new and important life into which she was entering? She had known nothing but her childhood — had scarcely commenced her girlhood. What could she comprehend of the trials, the cares, the hopes, the responsibilities of womanhood? I thought of none of these things. I had always been lighthearted to a degree that savored of frivolity. I usually made a jest of every thing — yet I did not look upon this matter as a frolic. I only remembered that I was keeping a promise. I had perfect faith in the tenderness of him to whom I confided myself. I did not in the least realize the novelty of my own situation.

At St. John's Park we met Mr. Mowatt and his two

groomsmen. I took his arm, and we walked to the house of the Rev. Mr. V——n, my sister and the gentlemen following.

We were ushered into the drawing room. Mr. V——n entered in his robes. He, of course, did not know which of the sisters was the bride. He took his seat, opened a large register, and asked the names and ages of the parties about to be married. When I replied in giving my name, he looked at me steadily, and with some surprise.

“Your age?” he inquired.

“Fifteen.”

He put down his pen, and repeated the question. For a few seconds he seemed doubtful whether he ought to proceed. I was thought to look younger even than my years; and I was dressed in a childlike manner, which probably made me appear younger still.

The law sanctions the marriage of a girl of fifteen, and he could not make any reasonable objection. The names were registered. Mr. V——n rose with the prayer book in his hand. We rose also, and the ceremony was performed in French. At its close he delivered a beautiful address, intended for the bridegroom’s edification, rather than for that of the childlike bride; wished us both much happiness, and we took our leave.

Our groomsmen had just left us. We had hardly walked a square when we encountered my father! My sister and I were greatly confused. My father joined us, and entered into conversation with Mr. Mowatt. All at once he exclaimed, looking at me, “Why, how like a bride you look! One of these days, Mowatt, she will grow up to be quite a fine girl!”



I could not repress a terrified exclamation at the word "bride," and trembled from head to foot. Fortunately my father was just leaving us, and did not notice my agitation.

We returned home, and I passed the rest of the day in gathering together my little possessions and in writing to my parents. I was to leave New York the next morning, and pass a few weeks in the country. The parting with my youngest sister, my sweet pupil, I felt more deeply than with all the rest. She was but five years old, yet, even at that age, her word could be trusted, and after making her promise not to mention what I was about to confide, I told her that I should soon leave her — that I was married — that we should live together no more. Nothing had shaken my self-possession as did her passionate burst of grief. She clasped her little arms about my neck, sobbing out, "Don't go! don't go, sister!" and cried until she fell asleep in my arms. When she awoke, I consoled her by the promise of my speedy return — and probably a description of the large wax doll which she was to possess after my departure was not without its composing effect. But though she clung to my side for the rest of that day, and now and then looked up into my face as though her heart were breaking, she kept my secret faithfully.

Mr. Mowatt passed the evening with us as usual, but little Julia's grief greatly depressed me. When he left, and I retired to the nursery, I could not help sighing to think that I should no longer be looked upon as one of the children. I began to have strange forebodings of the future, and again and again I repeated to myself, "O, if this were only a dream, and I could wake up!"

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, I was to join Mr. Mowatt, and, accompanied by the nursery maid, we were to take the steamboat for Nyack. His sister-in-law was residing there, and to her he purposed taking me.

When breakfast was over, I made some laughing excuse to kiss every one present, controlling, with a strong effort, the agitation which I could not but feel. As I stooped to kiss my father for the second time — I had already been at his bedside, and kissed him before he rose — my courage nearly gave way. In another instant I should have told him all.

He looked at me anxiously, and said, "What ails you, child?" I did not reply — I could not have answered, "Nothing." I hastened from the room, put on my bonnet and shawl, and, with my sister, hurriedly left the house. Little Julia had followed us to the street door. As I turned to look, she was standing with my mother on the steps, and kissed her hand when she saw me look back.

"Let us run! let us run!" I said to my sister, for all my courage was melting away, and I could trust myself no longer. And we did run, rapidly and without speaking, until we reached the spot where Mr. Mowatt was waiting for us. There I had to bid adieu to my faithful sister. She must go home and bear all the blame — see all the sorrow occasioned by my act, and know in her own heart that no fault was hers. She had only aided, through sisterly love, a step which she could not prevent. Luckily our parting was hurried. I had only time to thank her, and beg her to deliver my letter to our father, and to write to me immediately.

With a heavy heart she returned home, and broke

the news to an elder sister. They went together to my mother, and, after some gentle preparation, told her that I was married and gone. She was at first half stunned by the information, but, quickly recovering, made earnest inquiries concerning me — remembered my delicate health, and expressed many fears that I was not provided with sufficiently warm clothing to protect me against the cold, which was becoming severe. Anger had no place in her heart nor in her words. She was full of tender solicitude, but neither chided my sister for the course she had taken, nor pronounced severely upon my own.

My mother soon after visited the nursery, and found upon my dressing table a sprig of geranium that I had worn in my hair, with a white rose, the day previous. She planted the geranium; it grew; and she tended it carefully for the short remainder of her life. She called it "the bride's flower."

It was different with my father; he was indignant with the whole party, with me, with my sister, and, most of all, with Mr. Mowatt. My letter failed to pacify him. He at first declared that he would *never* forgive me, and it was three days before a letter was received, bringing his pardon. Those days seemed like a "never," indeed, to me. I began to believe that I had offended beyond forgiveness. I was almost heart broken at the idea of losing my father's love, upon which I had drawn too largely. My thoughts, "through all the faultful past, went sorrowing," and I could not bear to dwell upon a future of which he did not form the principal feature. But the pardon came, and an invitation to return home. I begged that our visit in the country might be shortened, and we returned in a

week. My father, mother, all, welcomed us with open arms, and without one chiding word. It was the true way to make me conscious of my own shortcomings. I might have nerved myself to meet rebukes, but could not bear unmoved the tenderness I had not deserved. Mr. Mowatt they received less cordially, but still with kindness.

Great disappointment was expressed that the play of the Mourning Bride could not be enacted on my father's birthday. He told us that we should have a bridal ball instead, and, as I was still to be the heroine, I might enact the "laughing bride." The ball took place, but I fear that, in my bridal robes, I appeared to be *assuming a part* quite as much as I should have done had we carried out our original intentions, and I had worn the costume of Almeira, the Mourning Bride.

### CHAPTER III.

*Studies. — Flatbush. — Purchase of Estate that had belonged to General Giles. — Haunted House. — My Sister May. — Our juvenile Sports and Mode of Life. — Number of Books read and commented upon every Year. — Shooting Excursions. — A first Sorrow. — Death of our Mother. — Melrose. — Sunday School. — Fortune Teller of the Fair. — Pelayo. — Reviewers Reviewed. — Celebration of Seventeenth Birthday. — Burlesque Concerts. — Tableaux. — The Gypsy Wanderer. — Bridal Address. — Ill health. — Departure for Europe.*

THE bearing of a new name, and the wearing of a ring, made very little alteration in my mode of life, or in the manner in which I occupied my time. I resumed my studies almost immediately. Mr. Mowatt himself instructed me in French and in the higher branches of English. I took music and singing lessons three times a week, and only abandoned drawing because a stooping position was found injurious to my health. In this latter accomplishment several of my father's children had shown a marked proficiency, which none had exhibited in music, and I laid aside my pencils with regret.

I was excessively fond of the country, and early in the spring Mr. Mowatt took me to reside in Flatbush, Long Island. The house in which we boarded was a large, old-fashioned mansion, built before the revolution, and had belonged to General Giles. There were dark and spacious vaults beneath the kitchens, where it was said that English prisoners had been confined; and

there was a secret chamber, above the great ball room, to which no access could be found save by a small window. The neighbors affirmed that a young girl had been purposely starved to death in that chamber, and that her ghost wandered at night about the house. Indeed, this report had gained such credence, that nothing could have induced many of the older inhabitants of the village to pass a night beneath the haunted roof.

The house stood back from the main road, embowered by magnificent old trees. The property consisted of twenty acres of land, in a high state of cultivation.

I became so much attached to this place that Mr. Mowatt purchased it for my gratification; stipulating, however, that I should content myself in passing the greater portion of the year in the country. I gladly consented. The house was repaired and refurnished; the gardens and orchards enlarged, and planted with an innumerable variety of fruit trees and flowers; a greenhouse built; a long arbor erected, where I could walk at midday, quite shaded from the sun; and a summer house reared in its centre, in which I could sit and write, or study. I had numberless pets — birds, dogs, pigeons, rabbits, a goat and kid, and a beautiful Arabian mare for my own especial use. We named her Queen Mab. At sixteen years old I found myself the mistress of this mansion, without a wish ungratified.

After a time, my father kindly allowed a dear and gentle sister, some four years younger, to reside with me, that I might not be lonely. My time was occupied in studying, taking care of my pets, riding about the country, and instructing my sister May in whatever I learned myself — French, Spanish, music, &c.

Brilliantly happy were the days we passed together.

We neither ceased to be children, nor gave up our childish sports. Our morning amusements were trundling a couple of huge hoops through the favorite arbor, dancing with the skipping rope, or floating round the "flying course," which had been erected to promote our healthful exercise. Sometimes we ordered ladders to be placed by cherry trees loaded down with fruit, and spent our mornings in the branches, gathering cherries, and reading when we were tired. An easy saddle horse was placed at my sister's disposal, and we took long rides together, accompanied by the gardener or coachman, Mr. Mowatt not being fond of the exercise. We had also a commodious carriage, and a fine pair of coach horses, but May and I preferred horseback exercise; driving seemed too quiet an amusement for our exuberant spirits.

From every book which I read I made extracts, and wrote down my impressions of the work. These extracts and critiques I kept in the form of a journal. During several years, this journal testified that I had read and commented upon between ninety and one hundred volumes yearly.

Every possible means was taken to strengthen my constitution through abundance of exercise, and thus to ward off the illnesses to which I was subject. For this purpose, Mr. Mowatt taught me the use of the gun. He was himself an admirable sportsman. I had many fears and some scruples to conquer, but after a time I took aim so accurately that I could shoot swallows on the wing. Many and many a morning, with a light, single-barrelled gun on my shoulder, dressed in half Turkish costume, and followed by our dogs, I rambled with him for miles through the woods, filling the game

bag which hung at my waist with birds of both our shooting. It now appears to me a cruel pastime, and bird lives no longer "stand within my danger." But in those days I seldom saw with my own eyes, or judged with my own judgment.

The first real sorrow I ever knew fell upon my heart as I stood beside the death bed of our mother. She was summoned away within a year after my marriage. For a time it seemed as though all I prized on earth had gone with her. Her last hours were ever present to me — the couch where she lay, surrounded by her weeping children and their father; her exquisitely chiselled features, perfect in their beauty, becoming more and more marble-like as her breath grew fainter; her transparent hands, that lay passively in ours; her glazing eyes, which, just as she breathed her last, beamed with a sudden look of intelligence that fell upon her youngest child, our little Julia; and the seraphic smile that settled upon her countenance when the last pang was over, and the angels bore her spirit away, — sleeping or waking, these were ever before my eyes! My pen lingers while I write of her, but what *she was* no pen can truly describe — a being indeed, —

"All dipped  
In angel instincts, breathing paradise.  
Happy he  
With such a mother; faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him."

We gave to our place the name of Melrose; not from any likeness that it bore to Melrose Abbey, but on account of the abundance of roses, of every description, that filled our greenhouses and were scattered over the grounds.



There was an Episcopal church in the village, which we attended, and May and I contributed our services as Sunday school teachers. In our little classes we took the deepest interest. Then there were two fairs, for the benefit of this church, held upon the magnificent grounds of Mr. C——n. My sisters presided at a table filled with our own work. Little Julia sold flowers and recited poems—I was constituted a fortune teller. They erected for me a bower formed of branches of evergreens. Over the entrance, in letters made of flowers, were the words, "*Temple of Fate.*" Within was a large wheel, of blue and gold, covered with numbers. Beside the wheel, somewhat fantastically dressed, I stood, with a golden wand in one hand and the "Book of Fate" in the other. I had written the fortunes in verse, and adapted them to the histories of certain persons, who, I was sure, would be present. By pressing the wand skilfully upon the wheel, as it turned, I could stop it at what number I pleased; and thus I created great amusement by the "*happy hits*" directed at those who sought to learn their destiny. The "Temple of Fate" proved highly productive to the interests of the church.

My fondness for rhyming continued undiminished. I was tired of fugitive pieces, and determined to write a poem of some length. What subject should I choose? I was reading with great avidity Schlegel's "Lectures on Literature." Schlegel remarks that "Poetry's original end and highest grade he believes to be epic"—I would write an epic poem! I chose a subject from Spanish history, and was soon thoroughly engrossed with my new, and to me delightful, occupation. In the evenings, I amused myself by reading aloud to Mr.

Mowatt what I had composed in the morning. I wrote with juvenile rapidity, and had not yet learned the great “art of *blotting*.” In a few months the poem was completed. It was entitled, “Pelayo, or the Cavern of Covadonga — a Poetical Romance in Five Cantos, founded on the History of the first King of Asturias.”

Mr. Mowatt, of course, listened with partial ears, and I believe I had a way of making versification sound more musical than it was — of creating a sense, through certain modulations of voice, which did not exist in the words themselves. He proposed that “Pelayo” should be published. The idea startled me. I was not then ambitious. I had thought more of feeding birds and taming pigeons than of winning fame. I loved to think that I possessed a household harp that would make pleasant music for the ears of kindred and friends; but I shrank from playing my part of imperfect musician before the world. Yet I was easily persuaded. The authorship of Pelayo was to be kept a profound secret. I assumed the name of “Isabel,” and the book was published by the Harpers.

Its existence was as ephemeral as it deserved to be. As readily exterminated by the critics as a butterfly could be crushed, it died an easy death. I alone suffered in its expiring agonies. The roseate veil of maternal love which shrouds the eyes of most young writers, when they look at their own productions, had not yet fallen from mine. I considered myself a very injured individual — a sort of literary martyr — and I assumed a Spartan courage in bearing my wrongs, which must have been particularly ridiculous.

Years afterwards I found an old copy of Pelayo,

and read a few lines. Very few they were, for I closed the book in mortified astonishment that I should ever have written such unmitigated stuff. Nor could I comprehend how the blindest affection could have allowed me to render it public.

The preface to Pelayo contained a bombastic threat that I would reply to any attacks made upon the book. I hurled a Liliputian defiance at the giant critics. They were forewarned that I was prepared to defend my poetical offspring to the death. Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers was probably running in my head; for, from the ashes of Pelayo sprang up a *satire*, (I use the word because it is on the titlepage,) entitled "Reviewers Reviewed." The title is sufficiently explanatory in setting forth the object of the book. The following extract from the preface betrays the impetuous spirit in which it was written:—

"Pelayo, the first rude effusion of a warm, though untutored heart, was presented to the public with all that rainbow hope, that unmingled buoyancy, which ever attends the joyous visions of expectant youth. I studied not the *science* of poetry—I heeded not its rules; in the enthusiasm of the moment, I only felt that Nature formed her poets before Nature's scorers shackled them with their modern trammels. Little did I dream, while tracing the carelessly light-toned preface of Pelayo of that literary ordeal to which it was offered; and in some unfortunate allusion to critics, (my imagination scarcely painting them as other than ideal beings,) I naturally gave vent to the playful exuberance of spirit which might have amused a circle of my own friends. But if I hoped to find amongst the 'wrath-dispensing race' a friend,—if I thought to ward off, or

beguile, the tempestuous hurricane of critic censure, — I but experienced the same disappointment thousands have before encountered — thousands must meet again.

“The most inoffensive badinage was interpreted into ‘*scorn*,’ and excuses for my conscious deficiency translated into ‘*self-esteem*.’ Had a just, even though severe, criticism been awarded me — had they quoted *one line* of mine, and displayed its excessive faultiness — had they used my own language, and proved its absurdity — had they shown how egregiously false was my versification, how imperfect my rhymes, or from whence my ideas were stolen, (for of all these ‘negligences and ignorances’ they bestowed on me a bountiful share,) I would have submitted, ay, thankfully, to the scourge which brought improvement with its sting; but, on the contrary, they gathered from the preface that Pelayo was written at the early age of sixteen — that proper attention had not been devoted to its revision — and that I, myself, was conscious of its innumerable defects; and, without further examination, they made the above sweeping allegations. I do not, cannot, deny their *truth*; I am at variance only with the spirit that dictated them, and their want of demonstrative proof.

✓ “Another objection was urged against Pelayo, which, not from me alone, but from the lips and soul of every patriotic American, demands reply; namely, the extreme folly of publishing poetry when its age was on the wane. In the old world, where the Muse’s glory has reached its meridian height, her power may well decline. But are not we of the new world? and shines she here, or has she ever shone, in full maturity and splendor, arrayed in laurels from which time has plucked no leaf? How revolting to our national pride

how humiliating, to believe that America should only produce a sickly poetic fire, expiring at its birth! Can poetry be on the wane while such men as Halleck and Bryant are in their prime? Though its infant pinions yet are weak, may they not one day soar beyond even proud Albion's constellated host of bards?"

One word in extenuation of the above extract—I was hardly eighteen when it was published.

"Reviewers Reviewed" attracted some attention. The book had a larger sale than Pelayo, and was now and then favorably noticed, probably through the sympathy of some critic who had himself been lashed by his contemporaries. I wrote no more under the signature of "Isabel." My greatest desire now was to preserve my incognita. I did not suppose it possible for the day ever to come when I should confess with perfect *sang froid* the "youthful indiscretion" of perpetrating such books as Pelayo and Reviewers Reviewed. As a child weeps over the fall of its card houses, so I mourned over the demolition of my first poetic castles, but cherishing the consolatory hope that mansions of after years would have surer foundation.

We still resided at Melrose. Occasionally I visited my family and friends in New York. Now and then we attended the theatre and other places of amusement, but my principal delight was in receiving guests at home. We gave numerous fêtes, but never mere dancing parties. They were always either of a poetic, musical, or dramatic character. One of these, and the most worthy of mention, was in celebration of my seventeenth birthday. Four of my friends had offered to write me birthday poems, and recite them in the evening, after our guests were assembled. Without hint-

ing my intention, I determined to surprise them with *versified* replies; though, of course, I could only guess at the subject matter of their effusions. I passed a happy day in decking the house with garlands, and robbing our own and our neighbors' greenhouses of all the flowers that they could yield. In a little rustic basket, covered with geranium leaves, lay four exquisite bouquets. To each bouquet was attached a tiny scroll. These were designed for the four poets. The scrolls contained the verses addressed to the different parties.

Evening brought a merry throng of guests. After refreshments, and some exquisite music from a friend who never failed me, an arm chair was drawn into the centre of the room by Mr. L——n, the chief of my birthday poets. He advanced to lead me to my temporary throne; but, declining his hand, I stole out of the room, and, before he had recovered from his surprise at the apparent rudeness, returned with my basket of bouquets. I took the vacant seat. The four minstrels gathered around me, and Mr. L——n commenced reciting a very beautiful, original poem, which was listened to with breathless attention. At the line, —

“And thus we crown thee, Cora, queen,” —

he drew forth a concealed wreath of natural flowers, made in the form of a regal crown, and placed it on my head. For this coronation I was quite unprepared. When he ceased to speak, the applause and the congratulations of the company expressed their delight.

Ungracious as it seemed, I sat perfectly still until silence was restored; then, selecting the bouquet (or breast knot, rather) which I had prepared for him, uttered my thanks in verse, and presented the flowers.

The general surprise may be well imagined. The three poetesses then addressed me in turn; and, as each one finished, I replied, presenting the bouquets and scrolls. The rustic basket was not yet quite emptied; there remained another paper of plain white, folded like a letter.

“Is that for me?” “Is that for me?” asked many an eager voice, as I broke the seal and prepared to read. When the curiosity of the company had reached its highest pitch, I read aloud the name of the one person present who, I was sure, *least expected* that he had been made the subject of a poem—a plain, kind-hearted, merry old gentleman of the ancient school—the oldest, truest, most attached friend of Mr. Mowatt. How he started from his seat when he heard the words “To J—— H——d”!

One might have thought a leaden and not a “paper bullet” had entered his ears. The poem was read, and presented, and praised, and long life was wished the queen and many such another birthday. The music recommenced, and we

“Chased the rosy hours with flying feet.”

So passed my seventeenth birthday.

Almost every week, my sister May and I, with the assistance of little Julia, who made us frequent visits, got up some rural entertainment, principally for our own amusement and that of Mr. Mowatt, who invited his friends or not, just as he felt disposed. Very often he formed our *sole* audience. We dignified these entertainments by the name of “concerts,” and always had written programmes of the performance. The songs were intermingled with recitations and scenes from

tragedies. Music was one of our chief studies ; but, with the fullest appreciation of its beauties, we were devoid of any decided musical talent. I except little Julia, who had naturally a good ear and sweet voice. I also possessed a voice which my teachers pronounced more than ordinarily fine ; but I had a faulty ear, and the slightest trepidation made me sing false. For years I labored to conquer this defect, but I never could learn to sing before strangers to my own satisfaction — perhaps I should add, to theirs !

✓ Besides our weekly (*burlesque*) concerts, we frequently prepared exhibitions of *tableaux vivants* for our friends, which were eminently successful. Then we several times enacted, for different assemblages of guests, an original play. This was my first positive attempt as a dramatist. It was called

“THE GYPSY WANDERER,

OR

THE STOLEN CHILD.

*An Operetta.*

DEDICATED TO MY SISTER JULIA.”

The play — or *dramatic sketch* — was written in blank verse, and interspersed with numerous songs. Little Julia was, of course, the heroine. As our *corps dramatique* consisted of but *three*, it required some ingenuity to invent a play the interest of which should be sustained by three characters. The plot was very simple, and yet proved effective in acting. I personated “Lady Ivon,” a broken-hearted young widow, whose infant child had been stolen some years previously by gypsies. My sister May enacted “Lucille,” the neice and con



fidant of Lady Ivon. Little Julia was "Florette," the stolen child. The scene opens with Lady Ivon and Lucille. Lucille induces Lady Ivon to relate the history of her sorrows, through which means the audience is of course apprised of them. Suddenly their conversation is interrupted by the voice of a gypsy child singing without, who begs for charity in her song. Lucille desires to turn her from the doors, on account of her obnoxious race. Lady Ivon objects. The little Florette enters, dressed as a gypsy, with a bundle of small brooms slung over her shoulders, a bunch of lavender in one hand, and a basket of flowers in the other. The ladies question her, and she answers with snatches of old ballads ; now with

"Over the mountain and over the moor,  
Hungry and weary, I wander forlorn ;  
My father is dead, and my mother is poor,  
And I mourn for the days that will never return ;"

then with "Buy a broom," presenting her tiny brooms ; or with "Come, buy my lavender," distributing her lavender.

Lady Ivon, of course, traces a likeness between this child and the one she lost, and is greatly agitated. The little Florette makes known all she can remember of herself, and Lucille discovers a mystical circlet bound over her arm. Florette entreats that this may not be removed ; it is a charm placed there by a gypsy prophetess of her tribe, and she has been warned that evil would befall her should it ever be loosened. Of course, her prayers are unheeded — the band is hastily torn away. It concealed a natural mark, by means of which Lady Ivon recognizes her child, and the dramatic sketch

ends in a *tableau*. Its representation occupied an hour and a half.

About this period I began to write fugitive pieces, which were published in various magazines, under the signature of "Cora." The first to which I allowed this, my own name, to be attached, was a bridal address to my sister Emma. When the bride and bridegroom, after the ceremony, returned from church to our father's house, little Julia came forward and greeted them with this address. *Her* delivery, and not the poem itself, produced a deep impression. Dr. H——ks, who had officiated, was much moved, and his were not the only eyes "unused to weep" that found themselves involuntarily moistened by the pathetic tones and earnest delivery of a child of eight years old. While my little pupil was speaking, I scanned the countenances of those around, and what I read there gave me more intense delight than did ever, in after years, the most enthusiastic applause that pealed in my ears.

My health had been for some time failing. I was no longer allowed to study; I was forbidden to write. Physicians pronounced me consumptive, and recommended a sea voyage. My newly-married sister and her husband were about to visit Europe. It was arranged that I, and an aunt to whom I was warmly attached, should accompany them. Mr. Mowatt's professional engagements prevented his leaving New York.

The first parting from home, and the loved ones left behind, was naturally a severe trial. Had I been less seriously indisposed, I should have rebelled at the banishment. But excessive weakness enabled me to bid farewell with tearless eyes, and a sensation of icy calmness, which even the passionate grief of my beloved

companion, my sweet sister May, could not disturb. In a poem, (written in the third person,) composed on board of ship, descriptive of the parting, the following lines occur in allusion to this sister. They portray the closeness of our union:—

She, for many moons, had been  
The loved companion of her lonely hours.  
They dwelt together — from the selfsame page  
Had read — laughed gayly o'er the same light tales,  
Sang the same songs, or *strove*, perchance, to sing —  
For each had more of "music in her soul,"  
And harmony in her love, than melody  
Upon her lips. Arm softly linked in arm,  
Each sunny morn had they strolled loving forth  
To take unmarked their pleasant rambles through  
The little village where the elder dwelt,  
And where the younger felt her home to be.

We sailed in the ship *Roscus*, under the command of Captain Collins. I remained very ill for the first two weeks, but, before the voyage was completed, began to make rapid strides towards health. My cough had nearly disappeared, and I was more free from suffering than I had been for months previous. We reached Liverpool in three weeks, and hastened to London.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Journal of a Week passed in London. — Olympic Theatre. — Madame Vestris. — St. Paul's Cathedral. — The Tower. — The Tunnel. — Italian Opera. — Persiani. — Coliseum. — Zoölogical Gardens. — Hyde Park. — Madame Tussaud's. — St. James's Theatre. — House of Lords. — Westminster. — British Museum. — Kensington Gardens. — Richmond. — Standing "in wait" for the Queen. — Departure from London.*

WE spent but a week — one delightful week — in London. How little I then thought that it would be my lot to return there to pass years! — to return, no longer the thoughtless, happy girl, passing unnoticed in the crowd, and enjoying every moment of her existence, but the grief-tried woman, — standing where all eyes were fixed upon her, — with duties, cares, professional responsibilities, and the lives of others bound up in hers. My glowing impressions of that first week in London, are conveyed in the following hasty journal, addressed to Mr. Mowatt: —

### "ONE WEEK IN LONDON.

"We arrived late on Thursday evening, wearied out with our eleven hours' journey from Liverpool; but, dashing along the smooth roads, after we had left the train, sleep was soon banished from our drooping eyelids. The gaslights shed around us a flood of radiance, which gave the city the appearance of an illumination,

and every object was as distinctly visible as at midday. That freshness of feeling which belongs to the inexperienced traveller imparted a zest to our slightest enjoyments. Trivial objects, which would have been glanced at unheeded by the more sophisticated, called forth from us exclamations of wondering astonishment.

“That we might present a somewhat more civilized appearance in this land of splendor and gayety, we devoted Friday to shopping. A private carriage was ordered, and, with what our friend J. H——d would call ‘very wide-awake’ expressions of countenance, we set out on our first drive. There were so many attractions on every side, that I, at least, soon became too bewildered to know which way to turn. Aunt —— would cry, ‘Look, look, look here!’ putting her head out of one window of the carriage, while Emma ejaculated, ‘Quick, quick, or you will miss seeing this!’ and forced her slight figure half out of the other. While I was trying to accomplish the impossibility of ‘looking both ways at once,’ I part of the time saw nothing.

“Every moment our attention was riveted by something new. The wide and cleanly streets, through which six carriages not unfrequently flew by *abreast* — the velocity with which the gayly-colored ‘flvs’ and ‘cabs’ (so unlike any of our vehicles at home) dashed along the macadamized roads — the liveried coachmen and footmen, who apparently form one third of the populace, and, when not behind their masters’ carriages, lounge idly about the doorsteps — the palace-like shops, magnificent without and sumptuous within — rooms devoted to millinery and mantuamaking, furnished as gorgeously and as tastefully as drawing rooms at home — every thing in turn awakened our astonishment and

admiration. We could hardly say with what we were most charmed, unless it was the splendid buildings with which London is as thickly studded as the queen's crown with jewels.

"A particular delight to me were the little sparrows and swallows, which, in spite of all this pomp and splendor, hopped tamely about the streets, chirping most musically as they gathered straws or threads to build their nests with in the roofs of the houses. I amused myself by flinging bits of worsted out of the window, and watching the fearless little creatures as they alighted, almost at the feet of some passer by, to pick up these treasures.

"The attendance in London is excellent. You are always at liberty to fancy yourself a *princess*, for you are treated as one; but you must pay as princesses do, or are supposed to do. Before your coachman can jump from his seat, the door is opened by some little rogue, the steps let down, and his hat touched significantly. If you take no notice of this, he plainly asks you to spare something for the drinking of your health. His manner very markedly implies that thus alone can its preservation be secured. Three or four waiters (in tights and pumps) attend you to your carriage; but you are expected to slip some silver in their hands for handing you in, or even picking up your handkerchief. The very play bills at the theatres are *sold* by men who run beside your carriage, and crowd around to force them upon you before you alight. Every body is feed, and for the slightest service you must cross the doer's hand with silver.

"We spent the whole of Friday in making purchases and strolling through bazaars and shops. I must give

you some idea of the expedition of London dressmakers. At five o'clock we drove to a court dressmaker, that I might be measured for a dress to be worn the next evening at the opera. In *eight* minutes (three of which were passed in astonishment at my giving my name as a married woman) I was fitted and in the carriage again! The dress came home the next morning, and became me *à merveille*.

“ Friday evening we visited the Olympic Theatre. ✓ With Madame Vestris we were all of us charmed. I now understood why she was not appreciated in America. *This* is her *sphere* — she is the planet round which her satellites move. Drawing light from her, they shine themselves, and thus add to her lustre. She is nothing *alone* — she must have a certain *entourage* to develop and set forth her powers. One could discern a woman's taste and woman's hand in all the most minute arrangements of this theatre. There was just enough light to give proper effect; the scenery and dresses were historically appropriate; every character of the play, even down to the postilions and waiters, was well sustained. The illusion was thus rendered perfect.

“ The entertainment consisted of a series of light pieces, by turns serious or comic, each (like Miss Edgeworth's tales) with its moral, and filled with patriotic and loyal sentiments, which drew down thunders of applause from the attentive audience. Madame Vestris herself sang a little ballad, commencing ‘ Here's a health to her majesty,’ in the most bewitching manner. A large portion of the audience *stood* while she was singing, (I presume in token of their loyalty,) and she was again and again encored. The theatre is very small, but a perfect *bijou*. The only light (excepting

those on the stage) proceeds from one large chandelier suspended from the ceiling. Here, as at the entrance of *every other* place of public amusement, her majesty's officers are stationed, and prevent disturbance.

"On Saturday morning we drove around Somerset Square, a magnificent edifice, formerly a palace, but now degenerated into law offices. When the building was in progress, a watch fell from the pocket of a mason on the roof, and lodged between two stones near the third story window, and yet remains distinctly visible, but beyond reach.

"We then wended our way to St. Paul's Cathedral, second only to St. Peter's at Rome. Where shall I find words to describe to you this stupendous pile?"

Here followed a long account, which I omit — St. Paul's has been so frequently and so much more ably described.

"From the Cathedral we drove to the Tower. With the latter I was greatly disappointed — perhaps because the impressions left by the former were still so fresh upon my mind. I thought the Tower bore a strong resemblance to some vast museum. We were conducted about by an attendant warden in the queen's livery. There was a golden crown, and the letters *V. R.*, (*Victoria Regina*), embroidered on the back of his coat. He made his explanatory remarks in the set phrase and monotonous tone of an automaton.

"This Tower was formerly a royal residence, but, since the reign of Elizabeth, has been occupied as a state prison, royal arsenal, and place of safety for the jewels of the crown.

"From the Tower we drove to the Tunnel. I should like an estimate to be made of the number of steps



which we ascended and descended that day. It could hardly fall short of a thousand, — a sort of exercise which gives one a capital idea of the *treadmill*. You are aware that the Tunnel is a capacious roadway, excavated under the Thames; the descent is long and wearisome. The Tunnel is now eight hundred and seventy feet in length, and its entire length is to be one thousand three hundred feet. The river has several times broken in, and much impeded the progress of the work. We had no time to remain here, for it was late in the afternoon. We drove back to the hotel, dined hastily, and then made our toilets for the Italian opera. The opera company only play twice a week. Strange to say, Saturday is the most fashionable night. The audience are all *en costume de bal*.

“The opera house is about three times the size of our Park Theatre. It has five tiers of boxes — the audience are mostly an assemblage of nobility. I do not quite understand how it is that their boxes can be hired. By paying a sufficiently exorbitant price, we obtained the Duchess of Grosvenor’s box without difficulty. The queen was present; but our republican curiosity was not gratified, for she sat directly beneath our *loge*. ✓

“The opera was Lucia di Lammermoor, with which you are very familiar; but you are not familiar with the almost inspired tones of Persiani, that charm and electrify her audience by turns. Her mad scene was *painfully* powerful — *terribly* beautiful. One or two of the airs have haunted me ever since. We have ✓ heard no such voices in America as those of Tamburini and Rubini.

“The next day, being Sunday, was indeed a day of

rest. We attended St. Martin's Church. Early on Monday morning, we started anew on sightseeing expeditions. Our first visit was to the Coliseum. The panorama, which represents a view of London from the top of St. Paul's Cathedral, is very superb. After spending some time in a minute examination, we were taken up to the top of the Coliseum, in the curious ascending room which rises from story to story, without any perceptible motion. Afterwards we visited the saloon, where there are many exquisite specimens of sculpture, then the conservatories, the Swiss cottage, the Alpine glen, the waterworks, and the gardens. In the Swiss cottage we sat upon the chair which was made for Queen Adelaide when she was about to visit the Coliseum — in the same chair Victoria has also reposed.

“Through the Zoölogical Gardens we rambled for nearly four hours, and were forced to leave without feeling as though we had seen all that was worthy of attention.

“From the gardens we drove to Hyde Park, to see the queen. A large concourse of people were assembled at the gates for the same purpose. We were disappointed in seeing her majesty, but fully repaid by the scene itself. I believe no resort in London affords so excellent an opportunity of reviewing the fashionable world. The spacious gravelled roads are covered with ladies and gentlemen, mounted on magnificent horses, and followed by their grooms. Our simplicity-loving eyes were almost dazzled by the fanciful and sometimes *fantastic* liveries, and the rich coloring of the gorgeous equipages that roll by in endless succession. Many of these carriages were of two different hues

intermingled — others of the most delicate pink, blue, light maroon, and I have seen even *scarlet*. The arms of the nobility to whom they belong are painted on the panels, and their crests embroidered in gold on the hammer cloth. Some of the coachmen and footmen *wore white powdered wigs and cocked hats*. They all looked to me as though they had just started up out of Cinderella's pumpkin.

“Opposite the central arch of the grand entrance to Hyde Park is a colossal statue of Achilles, erected by the *English ladies* in honor of the Duke of Wellington.

“We had left the hotel immediately after breakfast, but only returned home in time to dine by candlelight. We then visited Madame Tussaud's exhibition of wax figures, and spent the evening in promenading through her large and brilliantly-illuminated saloon. One group of statues consisted of the royal family and other celebrated personages. Victoria is represented as she appeared at her coronation. She is seated on a throne — the crown on her brow, in one hand the sceptre, and in the other a golden ball. The Lord Bishop of Canterbury is imploring a blessing; Lord Melbourne holding the sword of state; the Duke of Devonshire, his highness the Duke of Cambridge, the Duchess of Kent, and other members of the nobility are grouped around.

“In the midst of another group stands the lamented Princess Charlotte of Wales. Her face wears an expression of the most angelic sweetness.

“Another group is composed of Mary, Queen of Scots, refusing to sign the document by which she renounces her crown — Baron Ruthven, in a ferocious attitude, is attempting to compel her, the good Sir Robert Melville endeavoring to appease his wrath, and a ven-

erable monk gazing with indignation at the brutal baron who insults his mistress.

“Amongst the statues were those of Shakspeare, Byron, Scott, Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, and Malibran. One of the greatest curiosities is the figure of the beautiful Madame St. Amaranth, who rejected the disgraceful solicitations of Robespierre, and thus became the victim of his fury. She is stretched upon a couch in a dying attitude. Her bosom gently heaves to and fro like that of an expiring person; you might almost fancy that you felt her breath. Several of the statues move their heads so naturally that we at first mistook them for human beings. A mistake of precisely the opposite character occasioned us some confusion and no little merriment. An elderly lady was seated near the figure of Voltaire, intently gazing in his face. I placed my hand upon her shoulder, and said to Emma, ‘O, look at this one; it is capitally executed!’ The supposed statue turned its eyes upon me, and rose up to a terrible height, (as I thought,) with an annihilating expression. I did not sink into the earth, as the tall gentlewoman seemed to imagine that I was bound to do; but as soon as I could recover from a sensation of half-frightened surprise, I hurriedly begged her pardon. She swept by us without a word. Who could have helped laughing?

“The adjoining room, a veritable chamber of horrors, represents the interior of the Bastile. It is filled with heads of persons taken after their execution. The first was Marat, who was put to death by Charlotte Corday. Then came the heads of Robespierre, of Stewart and his wife, of Barrière, &c., all of them taken a few hours after execution. A model of the guillotine completed this most detestable exhibition. You probably remem-

ber that the fatal instrument was invented by Mr. Guillotin, a French physician, who actually *died of grief* caused by the horrible use made of his invention.

“Tuesday it stormed, and we devoted the morning to letter writing. In the afternoon we visited the National Historical Gallery and Miss Linwood’s exhibition. In the evening we attended the St. James Theatre. The theatre itself was worthy of all admiration. Not so the performance. The actors were monkeys and dogs. I confess that even the novelty of the exhibition could not lend it a charm.

“Our first visit on Wednesday was to the new House of Lords; the old one was burned in the late fire. We saw the throne which Victoria occupies when she opens Parliament; sat on the *woolsack* (and a very comfortable, *good-natured* sort of seat it is) appropriated to the Lord Chancellor, and examined the steps where the Duke of Essex stumbled on approaching the queen.

“From the House of Lords, with our expectations raised to the highest pitch, we crossed to Westminster Abbey. I shall not even attempt a description of what appears to me indescribable. I will only tell you of the monument that made the deepest impression. It was that of Lord and Lady Nightingale in the chapel of St. John. The expiring form of Lady Nightingale lies in the arms of her agonized husband, while ‘grim-visaged Death’ steals from beneath a tomb, and aims his unerring dart at the bosom of the dying woman. Her husband extends one arm imploringly to the king of terrors, and with the other folds his fragile wife to the bosom which cannot protect her from that one foe.

“We lingered a long time in the ‘Poets’ Corner,’ and talked of the illustrious dead. And we sat on the

chair in which her majesty and preceding sovereigns were crowned.

“From the abbey we drove to the celebrated British Museum, a vast receptacle of millions of wonders both of art and nature. Here the rest of the day was profitably consumed. We had only time to take a short drive through Hyde Park before dinner. We were too much fatigued to visit any place of amusement in the evening, and retired early.

“Early on Thursday morning we drove to Kensington Gardens, which adjoin Hyde Park. There is a lovely quietude about these beautiful gardens, which contrasts strangely with their noisy and more fashionable vicinity. Kensington Palace, to which the gardens are attached, was the former residence of the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria. It has little pretensions to grandeur—is built of old-fashioned looking brick, and reared with neither elegance nor taste.

“From the gardens we drove to Richmond, enchanting Richmond! Thomson’s Seasons were in our minds and on our lips, and their delightful association enhanced the charm of every prospect. I think this was the most agreeable drive I have ever yet taken. We all declared that there was no place we cared to visit after Richmond; and there we spent the remainder of the day, wandering about in a state of dreamy delight, and chiding the setting sun (which we viewed from Richmond Hill) for warning us to return homewards.

“On Friday we were occupied in packing. We were to leave for Hamburg in the evening. As we stood in the midst of an army of trunks, in the ‘very heat of battle,’—a battle waged against the impossi-

bility of making them contain more than they could hold, — H—— entered hastily and told us that the queen was expected to visit the National Gallery of Paintings. A crowd had already collected at a short distance; if we made haste, we might see her. Our toilets were rapidly completed, and we soon formed a portion of the expectant crowd. For an hour and a half we stood patiently waiting, listening to the doubts expressed by some, and the confident assurances of others, that her majesty would shortly pass. We then walked to St. James's Square, (more than a mile off,) in the hope of seeing her there. Again disappointed, we returned to our former station; but after remaining there another hour, we were forced to return to the hotel to finish our packing. The queen passed three hours afterwards.

"On the loveliest moonlight night I ever beheld, we bade adieu to London, with the earnest hope that we might one day return."

## CHAPTER V.

*Hamburg. — Bremen. — American Ladies supposed to be black. — Incident at a Dinner Party. — Bridal Address translated into German. — Usages and Manners of the Northern Germans. — Dinner Parties. — Funeral Customs. — Betrothal and Bridal Customs. — Bremen Cathedral. — Peculiarity of the Vault. — Corpses four Centuries old in a State of Preservation. — Robbing the Student of a Lock of Hair. — Frei Markt. — Our Housekeeping in Germany. — Studies. — Arrival of Mr. Mowatt. — His long Illness. — Departure for Paris.*

TWENTY-FOUR hours after our departure from London, we reached Hamburg by steamboat. Our passage across the North Sea was smooth and pleasant. In Hamburg we remained one week, visiting all places of interest and of public amusement within our reach. We were so constantly "on the wing" that I had no leisure to keep any record of our swallow-like flights. From Hamburg we proceeded to Bremen, travelling part of the way by *schnell post*. One of our party, who did not comprehend German, remarked that probably *schnell post* meant *snail* post, judging from the slow and tedious mode of progression. She was particularly indignant when the *swiftness* implied by the word *schnell* was translated to her, but consoled herself with the reflection that the expression was probably used in irony.

In Bremen resided the parents and relatives of our new brother-in-law. An amusing incident took place when he first presented to them his young wife. A



servant, who had resided some time in his father's family, concealed herself behind the street door to catch the first glimpse of my sister. During the tender embraces with which she was welcomed by her warmhearted relatives, the servant could not see her face, which was shadowed by a profusion of long, dark ringlets; but when the greeting was over, and she was conducted into the drawing room, and her bonnet removed, the girl had a full view of her countenance. As her mistress passed out of the room, she rushed to her, exclaiming in German, "O, she's *white*! she's not *black* — only her hair. I thought Master H—— had married an *American* woman, and brought you home a *black* daughter-in-law!" More intelligent individuals than this German *mädchen* were possessed with the belief that America produced only a race of negroes.

In Bremen our time passed most delightfully. My sister was *fêted* and courted for her own sake, as well as on account of her husband's position as a popular and influential merchant. My aunt and I shared in the hospitalities offered to them.

At the first large dinner party given to my brother and sister, when the healths were proposed, a gentleman rose and recited to them a poem in German. There was a great deal of applause — their glasses were touched by all present, and their healths drunk. Immediately afterwards the health of the "*dichterin*" (poetess) was offered. What was my astonishment when all eyes were turned upon me! I could only look with a questioning stare into the face of the gentleman who, having proposed the health, addressed me in a *then unknown tongue*. My surprise and confusion were not lessened when I perceived a host of outstretched

hands, every one holding a wine glass towards me. I looked at the challenging wine glasses in amazement — then at my own, which I did not attempt to lift to meet theirs — then at my brother-in-law, petitioning in dumb show that he would explain what was expected of me. He was seated at some distance, but made a sign for me to touch my glass to the offered glasses. I did so, and the health of the “*dichterin*” was drunk. I joined in, and stupidly drank my own health, for I had not then discovered that I was the “*dichterin*.”

A gentleman at my side, who could only speak a few words of English, enlightened me by saying, “*Dichterin*, dat is *you* — you pretty poem write your sister — Mr. B—— make German of.”

The Bridal Address which was recited at my sister’s nuptials had been translated into German without her knowledge or mine. These were the verses addressed to her when her health was proposed. Our kind German friends were very enthusiastic in regard to the poem, for which I was probably indebted to the translator. As for the original, it could only have been to them

“Like inarticulate breathings from a shrine  
Their *fancy took for granted* was divine.”

Soon after this, to my great surprise, the Bridal Address appeared in the London Weekly Gazette. It was inserted (at least, I so believe) by the editors, without the influence or knowledge of any of my friends, as an American production worthy of being quoted; all which to a youthful authoress was sufficiently gratifying. From that moment the self-mistrust which had always chilled me, when I was persuaded to make public what I wrote, began to melt away. I continued to

write on various subjects, in poetry and prose, and sent home occasional articles, which were published in the popular magazines of the day. The following, which appeared in the Ladies' Companion, gives my impressions of the manners and customs by which I was surrounded : —

“USAGES AND MANNERS OF THE NORTHERN GERMANS.

“There is, perhaps, no entertainment where so much tediousness and enjoyment, so much vivacity and dullness, are incongruously mingled as at a German dinner party of the present day : *enjoyment*, because sufficient wit and humor are congregated to speed Time on the wings of Pleasure — *tediousness*, because even Pleasure tires at length of using her wings, and leaves Time to hang heavily about the shoulders of those she forsakes. Four, even *five*, hours passed at the table is considered no unusual sitting ; and charmed must the voice be if its tones sink not into the monotony of heaviness, and bright the wit, if its flashes, tested through this weary ordeal, lose none of their brilliancy.

“The name of each invited guest, written on a slip of paper, is found on the plate designed for his use ; and in this manner the hostess reserves the privilege of joining those whose characters and fancies assimilate, and separating such as are at variance or of uncongenial temperaments ; thus, with the ever-needed assistance of the peacemaker, Tact, insuring the harmony of her entertainment.

“When dinner is announced, each gentleman promenades a lady round the table until her name is discovered, then leaves her to seek the seat assigned to himself, and though nobody enjoys the privilege of changing his

place, a timely hint to the hostess is not without its influence in securing the most agreeable one.

“The festive board is gorgeously spread with vases of costly china, perfuming the air with the bright-hued plunder of the greenhouse and garden, garlands of flowers, baskets of luscious fruits, and a profusion of tempting preserves, and fanciful confectionery, to delight the eye; while the other senses are gratifying themselves with the smoking and highly-seasoned viands, carved by the servants at side tables, and handed separately round the general board.

“The company once seated, a stranger is attracted by the courteous custom which makes each person turn with a smiling countenance to his neighbor, and, bowing, wish him ‘einen guten appetit;’ for there is a good-humored politeness in this social usage, which inspires a kindly feeling towards those in whose society you are thrown. You meet together to while away a few jovial hours, to make acquaintances of strangers, or draw closer the bonds of friendship round acquaintances already made; and your intercourse commences with a friendly wish, responded by every lip, which seems to give you, even though strangers, some emotion in common, some desire, which, being mutual, assists in establishing that ease without which enjoyment may be assumed but never really felt.

“It would be in vain to attempt describing the order of courses, which vary from fifteen to twenty, and are principally remarkable for the present mode of serving pudding before meat; between each course, an interval, which would be long, unshortened by the agreeable converse of those around, is permitted to intervene.

“In the avowed land of melody, it would appear use-

less to mention that the most exquisite songs and finest instrumental music form a delightful part of this as of every festivity. A number of toasts are usually drunk, accompanied by speeches from their proposers; each glass, when filled, being raised and lightly touched to the one nearest on either side, is made to send forth a musical, ringing sound, peculiarly merry and pleasant to the ear; and, so dexterously is this ceremony sometimes performed, that the simultaneously joined glasses, circling the table, seem to form symbolic links of the social chain that unites those who hold them, which, (as they generally drink claret,) in *lightness* and *rosiness*, may be further compared to these emblematic fetters. If the health of one of the company, as an especial honor, is proposed, every glass is touched to his, and gentlemen seated at a distance from the person toasted ordinarily rise, and approach him, that their glasses may come in collision. The health of the host and hostess, with an acknowledgment of their hospitality, is never omitted; and the beautiful or humorous sentiments expressed in these toasts are an unbounded source of entertainment.

“After a number of courses have been served, the host leaves his seat, and, slowly making the tour of the table, pauses beside each guest, to whisper kind wishes, or make some civil inquiry, or lively jest, which soon spreads amongst the company. I once saw a charming old gentleman, the snows of many a winter wreathing his brow, who was promenading round his convivial board, when he reached the chair of his still blooming wife, and she raising her good-tempered face, (which had been smilingly turned towards her guests, like a sunbeam shedding light on all around,) feigned to be too occupied to stop, but suddenly, and playfully stooping, snatched a

kiss from the lips so temptingly approached to his, with all the enthusiasm a young lover might have infused in the act; nor was this little incident, or *accident*, rather, considered as an evidence of ill breeding, or made the subject of severe comment, as in any more form-loving land it inevitably would have been.

“After the hundred and one courses have wearily *run their course*, if the family live in the good old-fashioned style, richly-ornamented pipes, of a ludicrous length, are introduced, and generally not without making the *better acquaintance* of every gentleman present; who freely indulges in the luxury of sending forth fantastic wreaths of smoke to circle the fair one by his side, without the remotest fear of a distasteful frown deepening on her brow; and she, if fatigued, or preferring a more poetic garland, may soon disappear, almost unperceived, amid the clouds of smoke which darken the air, and refresh herself with the perfume of the carefully-tended garden, which is oftener sought than the boudoir or parlor. But, in general, the company rise together, and bowing to each other, or cordially grasping hands, conclude the ceremonies of the table by wishing the hearty *Gesegnete Mahlzeit*, ‘May your meal be blessed to you,’ which a foreigner, who has witnessed the abundant and varied repast of which they were pressed to partake, may secretly imagine is needed to insure its digestion. After a promenade in the garden, the company reassemble in the parlor, and well may the politeness of an American lady be beguiled into the vulgarity of amazement, to see her German friends quietly seat themselves, and composedly draw forth their needlework, as though busily engaged beside their own little work tables at home. The more elderly knit, the young embroider, and the

needle is plied to the merry music of their tongues, for their employment assists rather than precludes conversation. A German lady cannot conceive the possibility of passing an easy and pleasurable hour with her fingers unoccupied. To so great an extent does she carry this industrious mania, as to play Penelope even while receiving morning visitors, who, if they come to pass a few hours, are prepared to follow her example. I heard the *naïve* excuse of a young wife, who, being questioned on this subject by a foreigner, laughingly replied, 'We are weaving into substance again the smoke which our spendthrift husbands are puffing to the winds, lest their extravagance should ruin us. They waste, we save; so the balance is kept even.'

"The Germans are remarkably fond of the open air, and, after dinner, coffee is served, sometimes at small tables in the garden, which often faces the street, sometimes in vine-covered bowers, in the graceful balcony, or even unsheltered on the open walk, when the house is pleasantly located on the ramparts, or in an open square, or in a wide street. The ladies, while sipping their coffee, do not relinquish their needles, taking a stitch ever and anon to refresh themselves with the comfortable assurance that they are not idle; nor have the surrounding gentlemen parted with their pipes, which bear them affectionate company, unobjected to by the ladies, for they all seem, with Halleck, to have discovered

.    'The free  
And happy spirit that unseen reposes  
In the dim, shadowy clouds that hover o'er us,  
When smoking quietly,'

and to tolerate, even *hail*, that spirit's presence. If the residence of the host is not distant from the public gar-

dens, they frequently are sought by the company to listen to the delightful band of music ordinarily stationed there. On returning to the house, tea is served, and the young people amuse themselves with games and dancing, the elderly continuing their employments; a light supper is handed round, and the party breaks up, rarely earlier, and seldom later, than ten o'clock.

“On leaving the house, it is customary for each person to present the servant, stationed at the street door, with a piece of money, equal to five or six shillings; and this ‘drink geld,’ as it is called, which is obtained in various ways from the guests of the master, is always carried to the mistress of the mansion, and kept by her until the end of the year, when it is distributed amongst all the domestics of the family, and often amounts to so considerable a sum that a servant, before making an engagement, regularly asks whether much company is received, that an estimate may be formed of the lucrativeness of the situation.

“The funeral obsequies of the Germans vary in their different cities, and are generally marked by some striking peculiarity. In Hamburg, full wigs, of long, curling, flaxen hair, are usually worn by the pall bearers and attendants at the funeral. In Bremen, where I had more frequent opportunity of witnessing the last ceremonies in honor of the dead, the coffin, exposed on an open hearse, is preceded by a long procession of hired attendants, clothed in the deepest mourning, wearing three-cornered hats and flowing cloaks, fastened from shoulder to shoulder, and followed by a train of friends and relatives, sometimes with bared heads, in respect to the departed.

“The instant death claims its earthly victim, an at-



tendant, in the above-mentioned costume, is despatched formally to announce the event to the connections, friends, and neighbors of the deceased. This custom has given rise to some ludicrous mistakes, when foreigners have been near residents of the house of mourning, as was evinced by a party of American gentlemen, who were disturbed in their evening conviviality by the sudden appearance of one of these sable-clad messengers, begging to inform them, in the name of a wealthy and beautiful lady of the neighborhood, that she had just become a widow. The wondering strangers, having often in their promenades paid homage to the loveliness of the unknown lady, cordially thanked the messenger, crossed his palm with silver for his trouble or for good luck's sake, and bade him present their compliments to the afflicted lady; then congratulating themselves on the evidence of her preference, in thus speedily communicating her situation, commenced calculating how soon they might pay her their consolatory devoirs, and decided that the civility should be acknowledged without delay; but, happening to boast of their fortunate adventure to a friend somewhat more *au fait* to the customs of the country, the extraordinary meaning they had given to an ordinary form was, much to their disappointment, discovered.

"The body of the deceased, for many days after the spirit has been disenthralled, is watched with all the care and tenderness which were given to the couch of the living, and remains unconsigned to its parent earth until dissolution has rudely banished any hope of revival which lingered round the cherished clay. In Vienna, and several other cities of Germany, an elegant building, conveniently arranged, is especially devoted to the recep-

tion of the dead ; thither, on soft litters, they are gently removed, placed in a comfortable bed and heated chamber, (in winter,) with a bellrope attached to their hands, that, should animation return, assistance might be instantly summoned ; and thus the mourners, clinging to a fragile hope, by long contemplation of their affliction, become familiarized with its presence before they yield to the reluctant conviction of its reality. Thus they rob the first bitter pangs of their poignancy, and, as Gelaleddin of the East, who, when the favorite slave of his idolatry expired in his arms, commanded her to be borne to her sumptuous couch, forbade her death to be mentioned, inquired daily after her health, and regularly ordered her meals to be prepared and served, — like him, they soothe their sorrow by blinding themselves a while to the certainty of its existence.

“A churchyard is never, in Germany, as so often with us, the shunned and deserted spot, the mere necessary receptacle of lifeless flesh and crumbling bones, where nothing but the senseless marble and as cold and meaningless inscription, in the words of Körner, says, ‘Vergiss die trenen todten nicht.’

“In the beautiful calm of a summer’s evening, or in the memory-wakening stillness of a moonlight night, let the traveller seek the silent shades that shroud the forgotten dead. Whom does he see kneeling, with forehead bowed in prayer on the flower-strewn sod ? The wifeless father ! His little ones cling to his side, their young hearts swelling as they hear of her who sleeps beneath, yet lives above ; and they learn at the grave of the mother whose hand would have guided them to immortal happiness, the path by which they may rejoin her on high. Proceed a step farther. You will see a

young widow bending over a shattered column,\* and with gentle hands training the ivy at its base to wind round that sculptured emblem, even as her thoughts and affections intwine the memory of the departed. Still on—a limner's group of rosy children, checking their youthful merriment in this sacred spot, are silently wreathing the tomb of their parents with fresh garlands, or planting new flowers amid the already blooming parterre which conceals, yet marks, their graves. If one form reposes in that hallowed ground whose memory has ceased to dwell in the hearts of those who 'live to weep,' your eye selects its resting-place at a glance—the straggling bushes of long-neglected flowers struggle with rank and choking weeds that overtop them—no wreath hangs, in graceful memorial, over the costly monument, or hides the rude stone—the path around is grass-grown, and untrodden by the feet of memory and love. It is a desert spot, where beauty has withered as affection decayed.

“Schiller says truly,—

‘Die Klage sie wecket  
Die Todten nicht auf.’

And to mourn is indeed unavailing; but should forgetfulness be sought as the comforter of affliction, and consolation be found alone in the Lethe which banishes the lost from our thoughts? Death, which proves

‘What dust we dote on when ’tis man we love,’

should rather be the test of how perfect and changeless is that affection which, cherishing the *soul*, not merely

\* A monument not unusual in the graveyards of Germany.

its mortal tenement, survives, with that death-defying spirit, forever."

In alluding to the habits and peculiarities of the Germans, I cannot forbear to mention those with which I was most charmed — their betrothal and bridal ceremonies. These formed the subject of the following article, written from Germany, and published in one of the periodicals of the day :—

"BRIDAL CUSTOMS OF THE NORTHERN GERMANS.

"There still exists, even at this time, when imagination has been dethroned by cheerless reality, and form and fashion have utterly banished romance from the circle of domestic happiness, a charm interwoven with the nuptial ceremonies of the Germans, which preserves the warm and social emotions of the heart in their primitive brightness and purity.

"When a young girl is once betrothed, were the Hindoo *tali* (whose bond death only can dissolve) around her neck, she could not feel herself more irrevocably joined to him whom her plighted faith has blessed. She is, therefore, moved by no calculating motives for concealment. She is not coquette enough to court the attentions of other men, whom her unacknowledged vows might mislead; and a faithless lover, a jilted lady, and a broken engagement, are phenomena in her land too rarely heard of to be dreaded. Thus she does not blush to proclaim to the world her

'Pure, open, prosperous love,  
That, pledged on earth, and sealed above,  
Grows in the world's approving eyes,  
In friendship's smile, and home's caress,  
Collecting all the heart's sweet ties  
Into one knot of happiness.'

Her acquaintances are soon made partakers of her happiness. From this hour to that of her marriage she is called 'bride,' (resigning the name the instant she becomes a wife,) and regarded as a being on whom every testimony of affection and every kindness of friendship are to be lavished. Her friends and connections select her as the queen of their *fêtes*; and, at the dinner parties daily given in her honor, the seats of the bride and bridegroom grace the head of the festive board. Their plates are wreathed with garlands of natural flowers, and bouquets of the most exquisite buds and blossoms bloom in vases beside them. The first health proposed is the bride's, often accompanied by a feeling and beautiful address to the happy pair. It is usual for the bridegroom to express his thanks in an answer.

"A week before the nuptials, the most intimate friend of the bride invites her young companions to a festival called 'The Binding of the Myrtle Wreath.' On this occasion no married person is admitted."

"The myrtle wreath, which is to mingle with the tresses of the bride at her nuptials, is woven by the hands of young maidens, and the gentlemen are excluded from their presence until this ceremony is completed; the evening is then divided between dancing and amusing games. When the bridal morning arrives, bright-colored flags float gayly from the windows of the bridegroom's friends and business acquaintances; and a profusion of cadeaux, flowers, and poetry is showered in upon the bride. At the altar her brow is encircled by the myrtle wreath, whose binding she witnessed a few days previous—the emblem of that everlasting faith and constancy implanted in her heart. During

the evening there is always a sportive attempt to pluck the leaves from her garland, over which, to prevent these depredations, the bridegroom becomes guardian; and his hand alone, when her friends withdraw, removes the wreath from her brow. A serenade beneath their windows closes the ceremonies; and though,

‘When the young bride goes from her father’s hall,  
She goes unto love yet untried and new,  
She parts from the love which hath still been true,’

she seldom, in that happy clime, parts to weep over changed affections and unrealized hopes.

“Twenty-five years after the day of their union, should both parties be so fortunate as to reach together that advanced period, another festival celebrates the virtues of the *wife*, who again receives gifts, and tokens of affection, and congratulatory poems (some I have seen printed on satin) from her friends. Seated on a chair of state at an appointed hour, her two youngest children (if she have any) approach her, bearing a basket heaped with newly-gathered flowers, among the leaves of which glitters a silver crown. Presenting their beautiful burden, they recite some verses, generally composed by the elder children. Their father, who stands by her side, receives the crown and places it on the head of his wife, whose thoughts perhaps wander back to the eve when the myrtle wreath lay freshly there, and over the years that have since fled, which start up one by one before her, while she asks her heart if it has been as true and as fond as it vowed to be, or whether there is not yet some evidence of love unshown, some sacrifice of affection unoffered, by which she can add to the felicity of her husband and of his home.

“When half a century has rolled away, and the bride of fifty years ago has survived to be the beloved wife of half a hundred years of tried and unchanging affection, an event so extraordinary and so unfrequently witnessed is celebrated by the ‘golden hochzeit,’ or golden wedding, at which a crown of gold is presented the reverend matron. A clergyman, addressing the aged pair, rehearses the blessings which have been granted to them in the long life they have spent together, and revives the emotions of their youth in the remembrance of its by-gone pleasures.

“By some these customs would be esteemed useless or absurd; but when we reflect that they cherish and keep fresh the kindest feelings of the heart, constrain those who are honored by them to review their past lives and ask themselves whether the silver and the golden crown — the rewards of constancy and affection — have been fairly won, we may rather lament that these ceremonies should be confined to romantic Germany alone.”

There are so few objects of very decided interest to a traveller in Bremen, that I must not pass over without mention the remarkable cathedral which it contains. I have forgotten the dimensions, as I took no notes of them at the time. The cathedral is immensely high, and resembles some temple of the Greek or Roman gods rather than any modern edifice. It is filled with gayly-colored pictures of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Esther, &c., &c., habited in somewhat theatrical costumes. The pulpit is in the centre of the church. The altar is at the west end, and appears not unlike a *bower*. It is composed of four columns, wound round with gilt flowers, festoons of which are gracefully

suspended from the summit. Upon the top stands a *painted* figure of our Savior. One extended hand holds a golden crown, and the other a cross. At each end of the four corners are recording angels, with open books and ready pens. Beneath is the communion table, its rich covering of crimson velvet worked with emblematical devices in gold by the young ladies of Bremen. A grape vine, loaded with long clustering branches of golden fruit, forms the rear of the altar. The pulpit is supported by little, chubby, laughing angels, displaying their white teeth to great advantage, and by a ring of merry-looking apostles, whose persons betoken the most indubitably robust health.

In the vault of the cathedral dead bodies are preserved for centuries without decay. The bodies are not embalmed, but literally *dried*. It is a matter of question and wonder how the vault acquired the singular property of preservation. There have been various speculations on the subject, but no satisfactory reason has yet been given. The coffins were open, and the mysteriously-embalmed corpses, wrapped in their decaying shrouds, exhibited to visitors. Some of the bodies were *four hundred years old*. The teeth of the Countess of Stanhope (who is said to have been a great beauty) were still perfect, and a noble baron by her side yet retained his corpulent appearance. One body was that of a mason, who had fallen from the top of the cathedral and broken his neck. The head was almost completely separated from the body, though both were in a perfect state of preservation. Another body was that of a young student, who had been shot in a duel for his lady love. The hole in his breast where the ball went through was distinctly visible. One of our party



profanely severed a lock of hair from the head of this Romeo — robbing the dead of locks which time had spared.

Immediately in front of the cathedral is a small stone, upon which a cross is rudely cut, to mark the spot where the notorious Gottfried was beheaded. She is said to have committed upwards of seventy murders. Amongst her victims were her own husband and children.

During our stay in Bremen the *Frei Markt*, or annual fair, — the greatest jubilee in the year, — was held. It is described in the following letter, addressed at the time to one of my sisters : —

“Bremen has thrown aside her sombre garb and sober air of calm monotony and unexcited content. The great annual fair has commenced, and every thing is joviality, and bustle, and confusion. Fancy yourself transported to our side, dear May, and we will take you to see the *Frei Markt*. After your imaginary flight through the air, you find yourself in a large, gallery-like room, all doors and windows, with a floor minus the dear luxury of a carpet, but so highly polished that you can see your form reflected as in a mirror; and if you step too quickly, you will run some risk of measuring your length. This is our drawing room. The windows open on the ever-charming ramparts. Stand at those windows from ‘early morn to dewy eve,’ and your ears will be greeted by uninterrupted strains of music — sometimes approaching — sometimes dying away in the distance — sometimes immediately beneath the windows — but music in some shape never ceases. Now you hear the soft tones of a rude harp — now a wild, native instrument, with piercing notes, played on by young

boys — now it is only an organ to which you are listening, but it is managed with a skill to us unknown. The organ is surrounded by a troop of songstresses, the pathos of whose rich voices would impart a charm even to a less romantic accompaniment, *could such be found*.

“We walk out together. The ramparts, the gardens, the public squares, the streets are all densely crowded. Ladies in their gayest attire, countrywomen in their gala costumes, happy boys filling the air with merry sounds from the castanets on their fingers, crowds of laughing children with wreaths of flowers on their heads, all are hastening to enjoy the universal holiday.

“We pursue our way along the ramparts. See! there is a circus opened for these twelve days only. Near it an uncouth enclosure has suddenly sprung up, where rope dancers are *terrifying*, and therefore *delighting*, the gaping crowd. The road is lined with wandering minstrels, singing and playing for groats. At last we reach the great square and the market-place, where the fair is held. Here the throng is so dense that we must fight our way by means of divers gentle elbowings, quiet nudges, and pertinacious pushings, if we would pass at all. See the gayly-colored boats, and cars filled with enchanted boys and girls, swiftly wafted through the air! Look at those little urchins bestriding flying ponies, that whirl round a miniature railway to the sound of music! Each youthful hero has a mimic sword in his outstretched hand, and strives to secure the golden ring which peeps forth from a small opening at the side of a pole. But no sooner is the prize borne in triumph away than the ring is magically replaced by another.

“The whole square is covered with booths, fancifully

decorated, and fairy-looking houses, transported there in a night. These are filled with curiosities, exhibited by rosy-cheeked girls from the interior and south of Germany. Some of them are dressed in the picturesque Tyrolese costume; the beauty of others is disguised by the frightful provincial garb of black, with fifty long, funeral ribbons hanging from their heads; some are in the Hollandish dress, with wide brass bands encircling their brow; but the larger portion wear the more simple bodice, tunic, striped petticoat, and clean white cap of Bremen.

“All dwellings that face the square and market, whether private houses or hotels, are rented out for these twelve days to foreign venders, and rapid and singular is the transformation effected by the latter. No one knows his own home again.

“But let us not pass those wonder-relating peddlers without stopping. You see they carry about a series of pictures, pasted on boards — these they erect at each street corner. In a few moments a crowd assembles. Mute and statue-like stand the people, while in energetic language, and pointing to the groups of uncouth figures rudely delineated, this novel historian recounts how a spectre was seen in a haunted castle, where murder had been committed; and how a huge sword, that hung against the wall, dropped blood; and how the people fled, and the skeleton of a beautiful maiden was discovered, &c., &c., — all to the evident edification of his attentive listeners. Many of them are deeply moved at his sublime descriptions of the beauty of the lady, as plainly evinced by *the skeleton*, and the ferocity of her murderer, as attested by the blood-dropping sword. Sometimes, during the relation of these pathetic scenes,

solemn music is played; sometimes the tale of horror ends with a dirge to the memory of some unfortunate pair; or, if the tale be a merry one, with a nuptial song in honor of a happy couple. But the comic relations have fewer listeners. A German crowd are more enamoured of the terrible."

Twelve days, and the fair is over. In a single night, the booths, the fairy houses, the circus, flying boats, cars, horses disappear. Bremen wakes up the next morning from her festive dream, and is her sober, stately self again.

After we had passed some weeks in Bremen, my sister and her husband prepared to continue their travels. We expected Mr. Mowatt to join us in a few months, and I preferred quietly awaiting him with my aunt. I was particularly desirous of studying the German language, and so excellent an opportunity might not again be presented. We found no difficulty in hiring a pretty furnished house, situated upon the delightful Ramparts. The hospitality of our neighbors soon made us feel domesticated. My aunt could not speak a word of German. I only understood a few sentences, and yet we commenced housekeeping with German domestics; German venders to market with; German tradespeople to deal with; German friends to associate with, very few of whom understood English any better than we did German. I used to make purchases at the door with a dictionary in my hand. Our fruit and vegetable sellers, to whom I made signs requesting them to be patient while I hunted out the necessary words, stood with distended mouths, gazing at me in mute astonishment. I heard that a feminine dealer in vegetables, while speaking of me to a neighbor, put her

finger significantly on her forehead, and gave a doleful shake of the head, intimating that it was very doubtful whether all was right with me in that region.

My aunt's trials of this nature were even greater than my own. Many were the amusing dilemmas in which she was placed, owing to her ignorance of the language. One day she had gone to the *cuisine* to enact a series of pantomimic directions to the cook, while I was busy in my own room. By and by she called out to me, in great distress, —

“Good gracious, Anna, what is the German for a plate?”

“Teller,” I replied, leaning over the stair.

“Tell her what?” returned my aunt, not supposing that she had heard aright.

“Teller,” I answered back at the top of my voice.

“How *can* I tell her, unless you tell me what to tell her?” she retorted in a tone that betokened she was gradually becoming heated — and, indeed, the weather was sultry.

“Can't you hear me tell you to tell her *teller*?”

“That's just what I want to do; but how can I tell her, unless I know *what* to tell her?”

I was laughing so heartily that I could only shout out, “Tell her, teller.” But, fearing that my aunt might become exasperated, I ran down stairs, and for her edification uttered the magic word. Of course, the desired plate was produced, to her great amazement; but she good naturedly joined in my unrepressed merriment.

After the long rest, — for I had hardly opened a book since I left America, — I returned to my studies with fresh eagerness. The clock seldom struck six when I

was not taking my morning walk on the Ramparts; or, with a bevy of children and their nursery maids, feeding swans that floated on the stream which divides the Ramparts and the counterscarp.

At nine came my German teacher, a most accomplished lady, and remained two hours. She was succeeded by a music and singing master; for I felt bound to return to my Sisyphus labor, and renew my battles with the unconquerable music lessons.

Our German friends continued to overwhelm us with the warmest hospitality, and in a very short time I had sufficient command of the language to enjoy their society. Sometimes I took two German lessons in a day, instead of one, and exquisite was my enjoyment when the beauties of Goethe and Schiller gradually developed themselves to me.

We had passed about three months in Bremen, when Mr. Mowatt unexpectedly arrived. We looked for him a fortnight later. He took all the kindest precautions to guard me against the excitement of a surprise; but an annoying *contretemps* defeated his intentions. I was practising at the piano, when I heard his step and the sound of his voice, and a second afterwards saw him enter the room. The startled sensation of joy with which I sprang from my seat, produced, for the first time, a hemorrhage of the throat or lungs. I was afterwards afflicted in the same manner, for several years, whenever I labored under violent excitement. It was some days before I rallied. My newly-gained health had received a severe shock.

Mr. Mowatt proposed that we should visit the Rhine, make a tour through Switzerland, Italy, and France, and then return home. The preparations for our jour-

ney were nearly completed, when he was suddenly attacked by a disease of the eye, which almost destroyed his sight. The utmost skill of the two most celebrated homœopathists in Bremen did him no good. He passed four months in a darkened chamber, suffering the most excruciating agony, and deprived of all enjoyment, save that of being read to, or talked to, from morning until night.

Thus, day after day, each wearier and sadder than the preceding, passed on, though his affliction was borne with an almost feminine patience. He seemed to rally periodically, and then sink into his former state. During one of these intervals, I persuaded him to attempt a journey to Paris, in the hope that he might obtain more efficient medical advice. Our preparations were rapidly made for fear of a relapse. It was December; the weather was intensely cold, the travelling worse than at any other period of the year; yet we set out with Indian courage. The journey was accomplished in, I think, three days.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Paris. — Unexpected Friends. — Visit to Hahnemann. — Mrs. Hahnemann. — Her History. — New Physicians. — Recovery of Sight. — Parisian Gayeties. — Description of Ball at Colonel T——n's. — The Carnival. — General C——ss. — Rachel and her Sisters. — Facilities of Education in France. — American Copy of Parisian Manners. — Male and female Politicians. — Louis Philippe. — St. Germain Society. — Place de la Concorde. — Place Vendome. — Place du Carrousel. — Fountains. — Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile. — Tuileries. — Les Champs Elysées. — Bois de Boulogne. — Studies resumed. — Play for private Representation commenced. — Scenery painted in Paris. — Sailing for America.*

MOST sad was our entrance into that metropolis, where the heart of the great world is said to beat with its merriest pulsations. The strength of our invalid was completely exhausted, and scarcely had we reached Paris when he became dangerously ill. To have delivered the letters of mere fashionable introduction with which we were abundantly supplied, would at that moment have been a mockery. We should have been desolate indeed, had not friends sprung up around us in the kind relatives of a French brother-in-law. He was the husband of that sister who first won Mr. Mowatt's admiration, and who has long since gone to the "better land."

The mother and sisters of Mr. G—— were women of high refinement and most lovable character. They at once devoted themselves to lightening our cares for the sick, and cheering us by their agreeable society.



Mr. Mowatt, however, resisted all persuasions to place himself in the hands of their family physician. His prejudices were in favor of homœopathy. Hahnemann was then residing in Paris, and if the new science could yield balm for the invalid's affliction, we might seek it at the fountain head.

Hahnemann, at that period, had become too feeble to visit his patients. He received them at his own residence. Mr. Mowatt being confined to his bed, the duty of calling upon the learned doctor, and of minutely describing the case, devolved upon me.

It was scarcely nine o'clock when I entered Hahnemann's magnificent mansion; but his saloons were already crowded, and one o'clock struck before I gained an audience. A valet, in gaudy livery, who had taken my card some four hours before, then approached, and informed me that I would now be received into the consultation chamber. I followed him through a succession of apartments, all richly furnished, and embellished with numberless busts of Hahnemann, of various sizes. A door was thrown open, and I entered the consultation room.

At the head of a long table sat a lady, dressed in the most *recherché* demi-toilette, with a gold pen in her hand, and piles of books and papers strewed around her. She might have been forty years old; but I am no judge of ages. Her form was finely rounded, and her face still fresh and handsome. Her brow was remarkably high, and the hair, thrown back from her temples, fell in long, light curls upon her shoulders. Her complexion was brilliantly clear, and her blue eyes had a deeply-thoughtful expression. She rose to receive me, and it was not until she resumed her seat that a

shrivelled, little, old man became visible. He was reclining in a sumptuous arm chair, with a black velvet skullcap on his head, and in his mouth a richly-enamelled pipe, that reached almost to his knees. His face reminded me of a ruddy apple that had been withered by the frost; but the small, dark eyes, deeply set in his head, could scarcely have glittered with more brilliancy in his lusty youth. As I took the seat which Mrs. Hahnemann designated, he noticed me with a *look* rather than a bow, and removing the pipe from his mouth, deliberately sent a volume of smoke across the table — probably in token of greeting.

Mrs. Hahnemann addressed me, and wrote down my answers to her numerous questions; but at the conclusion of the interview declined prescribing, until the invalid made the effort to appear in person. Hahnemann sat puffing away as though his existence depended upon the amount of smoke with which he was surrounded, and apparently intent alone upon his pleasant occupation. But when I spoke of our long visit to Germany, he suddenly took the pipe from his mouth. "Sprechen sie Deutsche?" were the first words he addressed to me.

I had only to utter "Ya wohl," when a species of Promethean fire seemed to shoot through the veins of the smoking automaton; he laid down his pipe, and commenced an animated conversation in his own language.

He spoke of Germany and her institutions with enthusiasm; asked me many questions concerning America, and expressed his admiration of the few Americans with whom he was acquainted. As soon as politeness permitted, I led back the subject to the point from

which we had originally started — Mr. Mowatt's illness in Germany. At the first medical question, the pipe returned to its former position, the expanded countenance shrivelled up again, the distended muscles relaxed, the erect form sank back into a withered heap, and was quickly enveloped in smoke—he was the wearied-out old man again. Mrs. Hahnemann answered my question with much suavity, and then gracefully rose. This was her signal of dismissal. I promised to return with the patient as soon as possible. She touched a silver bell, the door was thrown open, and the liveried valet escorted me to my carriage.

I afterwards heard the history of Mrs. Hahnemann. She had been cured by her husband of a disease which other physicians pronounced necessarily fatal. Through gratitude, she bestowed her hand upon the man who had saved her life. Her husband taught her the science of medicine. She made rapid progress, and he soon pronounced his wife as skilful a physician as himself. When he became infirm, his practice was left almost entirely in her hands.

A few days after the first visit, I returned, accompanied by Mr. Mowatt. Again we had to wait several hours in the antechambers; and, when admitted, the interview was unsatisfactory. After but a short trial of the medicines prescribed, his sufferings were so intense that homœopathy was abandoned, and Madame G——'s family physician called in. Four months passed on and brought no relief. But succor came at last from the hands of an eminent American surgeon, Dr. M——tt, of New York. One fortnight from the day when he first undertook the case, Mr. Mowatt was able to exchange his darkened chamber for our lightly-

curtained drawing room. What a day of joy was that on which he took his first walk with unbandaged eyes upon the Champs Elysées! What a moment of happiness when, looking over my shoulder at the volume I was reading aloud, he discovered that, for the first time for many months, his eyes could distinguish print!

With a keener sense of enjoyment than I had ever yet experienced, I now mingled with the gay world, and became thoroughly fascinated with Parisian society. A portion of every morning was spent in visiting antique palaces, galleries of paintings, and various curiosities; and in the evening we often attended two or three balls on the same night. We also frequented the theatre, opera, concerts, as often as our social engagements would permit. Mr. Mowatt seldom ventured to trust his eyes to the blaze of ball-room chandeliers, but insisted upon my aunt and myself accepting every agreeable invitation. He used to say that he derived more amusement from listening to our humorous descriptions than he could have derived from being present. The constant habit of repeating for his diversion every thing we had seen and heard, soon rendered us quite accomplished *raconteurs*.

I insert the following description of a fancy ball, given by the American millionaire, Colonel T——n, which was declared to be the most charming of the many we attended. The account was written by me at the time for the Ladies' Companion:—

“Of all the magnificent entertainments which Paris has this season witnessed, the *bal costumé*, given at the residence of Colonel T——n, on the second night of the carnival, for splendor and concentrated variety of amusements, bears away the palm.

“Long before the palace-like mansion of Colonel T——n could be reached, the interminable line of equipages, with their coronets and coats of arms, the liveried coachmen in front, and fancifully-dressed chasseurs behind, announced what guests would grace his entertainment. On approaching the hotel, some fifty *gendarmes*, well mounted, guarded the brilliantly-illuminated and spacious court yard, while the canopied porch and whole front of the mansion were thronged by the attendant domestics of the visitors. Alighting, you are received by some twenty footmen, and ushered into an antechamber, the centre of which is occupied by the at present fashionable ornament, a handsome billiard table. Passing through this apartment, you are loudly announced at the door of the reception room, where stands the ever-graceful and affable hostess, whose very smile makes welcome, and whose courteous greeting sheds ease on all around.

“Twelve gorgeous saloons were thrown open. Where the uncouth door once had been, costly drapery was suspended, tastefully gathered in folds or festoons; the carpets of velvet, the divans, ottomans, and couches were all that could be imagined of luxurious and beautiful. The walls were fluted with gold or rich silks, and hung with the works of the first masters; the ceilings painted in a thousand devices. One apartment raised above the others overlooked the ball room, and was lined with a row of draperied arches, from which the dancers were viewed to the greatest advantage, their light forms reflected in the bright mirrors opposite, which covered one entire side of the dancing apartment. The thousand lights shed a flood of brilliancy which would almost have eclipsed sunshine; and the sparkling of diamonds

and many-colored gems threw a lustre around almost painfully dazzling.

“And the varied, the charming, the voluptuously beautiful costumes ! When Fashion, whose rigorous sway clothes the hunchback and the sylph in the same garb, forsook her throne, what taste, what art, were expended to set forth every grace, and show Beauty robed in all her charms, heightened by adornments which only displayed what they seemed intended to conceal ! There were sultans and sultanas, queens and courtiers, knights Templar and ladies in tournament robes ; the goddess of night, wrapped in her glittering silver stars, and the crescent on her fair brow, one bed of diamonds ; naiads and nymphs of the woods, Anna Boleyn, and Madame Pompadour. Even Joan of Arc herself forsook the rude field to enjoy the soft pleasures of these princely halls. There were costumes of every clime, ‘of every land where woman smiles or sighs.’

“It would have employed the eyes of Argus to have scanned them all. Soon as the midnight hour arrived, the swell of music stole upon the ear from the exquisite band of fifty musicians, and a general rush was made to the ball room, until then unopened. A large circle drawn in the centre of the apartment was the magic boundary not to be passed ; but the throng around it was inconceivably dense until the sound of horses’ feet was heard ; when all with one accord drew back as four fairy steeds, mounted by Cinderella postilions, drawing a Queen Mab chariot of crimson velvet, with golden wheels, flew twice around the ring. A pair of lovely shepherdesses, placing their flower-wreathed crooks upon the ground, sprang lightly from the chariot, and, as the car and its outriders disappeared, moved gracefully round in

a fanciful *pas de deux*, amidst the noisy plaudits of admiring spectators. The guests elevated themselves on sofas and couches, sometimes three or four crowding together on the small and delicately-shaped chairs, at the imminent risk of losing their balance ; while a host of crushed unfortunates on tiptoe behind, clinging to those raised by chance (as so often happens in the world) above them, made extremely perilous the position of both parties ; thus adding much to the excitement, and, according to the rule that Pleasure is enriched by sharing with her sister Pain, to the enjoyment, of the scene.

“ The pretty shepherdesses, after finishing their graceful evolutions, were put to flight by the entrance of some fifteen or twenty Turks, knights, and Highlanders on horseback, who, after going through a ludicrous *contre danse*, galloped noiselessly away amidst peals of merriment, which must have drowned the trampling of their horses’ feet ; for, strange to say, none was heard. Then entered Madame Pompadour, Louis XV. and his court, with their powdered wigs and magnificent jewelled robes. They performed with much spirit the old-fashioned dances of their age, amongst which the stately courtesying minuet called forth the most unbounded applause. It were in vain to attempt a description of the series of dances in character which followed ; each and all were executed with mingled taste and skill, and at their close the giddy waltz and gay quadrille were merrily joined in by the company in general ; and brigands flew round, encircling their fair captives ; Christians, unmolested, stole the pride of the Turkish harems ; and shepherdesses looked happy with lords.

“ When dancing had tired the unwilling feet of many

an enraptured fair one, the droll queries of a strolling manager, and pertinently stupid answers of his clown, forming a set enigmas or charades, gratefully varied the diversions. A handsome supper table, filled with confectionery, was accessible the whole evening; and a little past midnight the rich curtains which concealed a spacious apartment were thrown back, disclosing the most sumptuous banqueting board, spread with every delicacy that could gratify the palate or satisfy the appetite; heavy with the service of gold, bright with the dazzling radiancy of costly candelabras, and the mellow light of moonlight lamps, which lined the gilded walls, rich with such ornaments as the genius of Paris alone could execute. The table itself was so spacious and long, that, reflected in the large mirror at its foot, the eye refused to reach its farther end. When graced on either side by 'fair women,' who seemed to have been gathered from every land, lovely relics of every age, relieved by the background of 'brave men,' like the setting to jewels, what more splendid sight could be imagined?

"The morning had far advanced before the courteous host and hostess found their banquet halls deserted. It proved, indeed, —

'No sleep till morn, when youth and pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.'

But a gayer festival, with more *agremens* and less alloy to the general enjoyment, may seldom again be witnessed.

"The cost of this ball is currently estimated at eight thousand dollars. One lady present wore so many dia-



monds (said to be valued at two hundred thousand dollars) that she was escorted in her carriage by *gendarmes*, for fear of robbery."

Colonel T——'s fancy ball was given on the second day of the carnival. The celebration of the Parisian carnival does not, of course, approach that of the Italian, yet it is worthy of some mention. For three days Paris empties its populace into the streets, and every willing head wears Folly's cap and bells. The carnival procession consists of a cavalcade followed by infantry in the uniform of their respective lands. Amongst these the Chinese are the most singular. Then comes the *bœuf gras*, an immense ox, fattened to almost the size of an elephant, led by three butchers. Two of them are dressed as Romans, crowned with laurel, and bear glittering axes. The third is costumed as an Indian chief. All three of them look as though they had successfully tried upon themselves the experiment to which their contented-looking victim is indebted for its enormous proportions and present distinction. The horns of the ox are gilded and wreathed with flowers, and its huge sides caparisoned with a golden cloth wrought with fanciful devices. Following the *bœuf gras*, a car of white and gold is drawn by four white horses, with wreaths of flowers about their necks, and on their backs saddlecloths of silver and gold. The car is filled with young girls, youths, and lovely children in the garb of pagan deities. Old Time, with an infant in his arms, drives the horses. As the car passed our door, a rosy Cupid was playfully aiming silver arrows at his youthful, half-nude mother, Venus; Apollo was lying at the feet of one of the Muses. Pan entertained another with his rustic pipe. Vulcan was

busily preparing an iron net to entrap the lover of his wife, and Mars was laying his helmet and shield at the feet of Venus. A rich canopy suspended over the car shielded the mythological group from sun or rain. The procession ends with a heterogeneous mass of carriages, wagons, and market carts, all filled with masqueraders, dressed according to their eccentric fancies. The *bœuf gras* pays a visit to the king and certain of the ministers, and then to the stall of the butcher to whom he owes his honors. The stall is hung with tricolored ribbons and flowers. In front of it the procession halts, and the health of the butcher is drank in champagne, and responded to with cheers.

While this ceremony is taking place, a bountiful supply of cakes is flung into the streets, and noisy urchins scramble for their possession. From early morning until late at night the Boulevards and all the public streets are thronged with masqueraders, who delight the crowd with ludicrous feats, and sometimes enact comic characters with great *esprit*. The *dominoes* are generally supplied with bags of flour, from which they pelt indiscriminately every passer by; but when a carriage graced by ladies stops the way, bonbons and bouquets are showered at the windows. The masquerade balls commence at twelve o'clock, and, though attended by the aristocratic portion of the community as well as by the middle classes, they are too often the scenes of intrigue and boisterous mirth, though never of *open* indecorum.

During our stay in Paris, General Cass was the residing American minister; and he and his agreeable family were alike popular with the French, the English, and their own countrymen. Their entertainments were

strikingly informal and unostentatious, and therefore all the more delightful. We could not but enjoy the touches of republicanism which were now and then intermingled with aristocratic usages. The attractions must have been great elsewhere that ever induced us to forego our ambassador's receptions or balls.

Through constant mingling in Parisian society, we became acquainted with various distinguished persons, whose characters and peculiarities I should take delight in sketching; but I only feel at liberty to mention those who are in some way connected with my own history.

My history at this period was simply that of everyday fashionable life, and the interchange of civilities alone threw us in contact with those who had won fame and honors from a fastidious public.

I saw Rachel in her principal characters, and I retain the most vivid recollections of her thrilling impersonations. There was something terrific, something overwhelming, in them all. From the moment she came upon the stage, I was always under the influence of a spell. Her eyes had the power of a basilisk's upon me, and flashed with an intense brightness which no basilisk's could have rivalled. I never expect to see that acting equalled — to surpass it, in impassioned force and grandeur, appears to me impossible.

Accident made me acquainted with the two young sisters of Rachel. They were then at school, and were receiving a liberal education at the expense of their elder sister. They spoke of her with enthusiastic affection, and evidently looked forward to becoming her successors upon the stage — the legitimate inheritors of her genius.

So many incidents have occurred since our seven

months' visit to Paris, that various events of deeper interest have nearly obliterated my first impressions of the gay metropolis — of its thousand works of art and of science, and of its beautiful environs, Versailles, St. Cloud, &c. I do not therefore attempt to embody them in the form of a description. The following extract from a letter addressed to a younger sister, during the early part of our sojourn in Paris, may not be without interest to youthful readers :—

“What surprises me most in Paris is, that, with its innumerable luxuries, it lacks the air of *comfort* which characterizes England. It is difficult to get accustomed to the atmosphere of *inconsistency* which pervades every thing. Wealth and poverty, mirth and misery, seem to walk hand in hand. Paris reminds me of a fine woman magnificently attired, with soiled gloves, rent stockings, and worn-out shoes. There is always a striking incongruity in the accessories of Parisian magnificence.

“Napoleon, more than any other monarch, adorned and enriched this city. He planned and executed — finished what had been begun, and altered what was badly done. He did not confine himself to the erection of public buildings, to making roads and raising monuments, but he cultivated the arts and sciences, and fostered the genius of his countrymen. The facilities for acquiring knowledge and receiving a thorough education can nowhere be greater than in this metropolis. Public lectures on all subjects are daily delivered free of cost, and liberal instruction is bestowed on those who would devote themselves to the fine arts. The Maison Royale St. Denis is devoted to the education of the sisters, daughters, and nieces of the members of the

Legion of Honor ; and hundreds of young girls yearly receive a classical education at the expense of the government. Their discipline is said to be particularly gentle. They wear a uniform of black.

“ Poverty is not here considered to be so nearly a crime as it is with us and in England. Talents, education, manners, even *personal attractions*, are placed before riches. Admission into good society may be commanded by *these*, while with us the entrance is too often purchasable.

“ The customs and fashions which we imitate as *Parisian* are not unfrequently mere caricatures of those that exist in Paris. For instance, it is the present *mode* not to introduce persons who meet at parties or in visiting, but the custom is intended to obviate the ceremoniousness of formal introductions. Every one is expected to talk to his neighbor ; and if mutual pleasure is received from the intercourse, an acquaintance is formed. The same fashion in vogue with us renders society cold and stiff. We abolish introductions because the Parisians do so ; but we only take this first step in our transatlantic imitations. Few persons feel at liberty to address strangers. Little, contracted circles of friends herd in clannish groups together, and mar the true object of society. As yet, we only *follow* the fashions ; we do not conceive the spirit which dictated them.

“ So in our mode of dressing. Expensive materials, worn here only at balls, are imported by American merchants and pronounced to be ‘ very fashionable in Paris.’ They are universally bought by our belles, who, instead of wearing them at proper seasons, parade the streets in what is meant exclusively for evening costume.

“ Are we not as yet merely a nation of *experiment-*

ers? Houses are built in a few weeks, to fall in a few more; fortunes are made in a day, to be lost in another. We are like children working their samplers, who make hundreds of mistakes, and destroy their work many times before they can perform it aright.

“You have always heard and read that the French nation were noted for their suavity of manners, gayety of heart, and extreme politeness. But since the turbulent *bouleversements* that have agitated France, and especially since the last revolution, this spirit, it is said, has changed. The men, in particular, are not so gay as they were, because their pursuit is not now so entirely that of pleasure. They ponder public contingencies more deeply, and France is not happy. All — both men and women — are politicians, and maintain their ground with a firmness which leads to long discussions. Both parties become easily excited, and courtliness of speech and manner are too often forgotten.

“The king, Louis Philippe, is not beloved. So fearful is he of another attempt upon his life, that he is scarcely ever seen in public. Paris is divided by the River Seine. On one side is the palace of the Tuileries, where the king resides. On the opposite side dwell the proud scions of the noble families of France. This society, called the St. Germain, is much more select, and far more difficult of access, than the court itself. In the circles of the St. Germain, the old style of address and ancient ceremonies of the splendid age of Louis XIV. are adhered to and revered.

“It strikes a stranger in Paris that half the city is composed of magnificent shops. The private dwellings are above them. Every family hires a floor, and this manner of living is considered perfectly respectable —

even fashionable. I was amused with the fanciful titles given to these magazines — such as *Aux Pauvres Diables*, *A la Balayeuse*, *A la Pensée*, *A la jeune Anglaise*, &c.

“Les Passages, with which the city abounds, are the most pleasant places where one can shop on foot. The houses are built over long arches, beneath which runs a sheltered promenade, lined on both sides with *boutiques*. These promenades are called *passages*. They are more or less splendid, according to the quarter of the city in which they are situated.

“Of all the beautiful squares with which the city is adorned, the first and most magnificent is the Place de la Concorde, or Place Louis Quinze, as it is generally called. Many terrible catastrophes have rendered this spot famous; amongst them the execution of Louis XVI., and hundreds of other unfortunates known to fame and history. From every side of this place there is a charming view. Standing in the centre, you behold two majestic buildings, with an arcade walk running in front of them, formed of Corinthian columns; and in the distance appears the chaste and lovely Church of la Madeleine. To the east are the Champs Elysées, and between the noble avenues of trees rises the triumphal arch of Napoleon, called *L'Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile*. On the west is the garden of the Tuileries, and on the south may be seen the Chamber of Deputies; also a line of costly edifices running along the banks of the Seine, and, peering above them, the dome of the Invalides. In the centre of the square is the obelisk of Luxor, which stood before the temple of Thebes, and was introduced by the French government from Egypt. It is an immense pyramid-like column,

slightly broken at the top, and covered with hieroglyphics. It took eight hundred men three months to remove it from its former station. To accomplish this, a road to the Nile had to be made, and numbers of Arab dwellings, which intercepted its path, or were built against its base, had to be levelled to the ground. On either side of this venerable monument are two ingenious fountains, not quite completed. The square is filled with statues, and in the evening brilliantly illuminated by a quantity of gilded lamps raised on fluted columns of glittering fretwork.

“The Place Vendome is another celebrated square, in the centre of which shoots up a triumphal pillar, erected by Napoleon in honor of his German campaign of 1805. It is built in imitation of Trajan’s Pillar at Rome, and is said to have been formed of the cannon taken by Napoleon in battle. On the pedestal are represented in bas relief the victories of Napoleon, and on the top stands a statue of the great emperor. A winding staircase leads to the terrace above the column, which, being one hundred and thirty feet high, commands a fine view of the city. The ascent is totally dark, and each visitor carries a lantern, presented to him by one of Napoleon’s veteran soldiers, who guards the entrance.

“The Place du Carrousel is named after a great tournament held there in the golden age of Louis XIV. It was here also that the infernal machine exploded in 1800.

“I was particularly charmed with the fountains, which are scattered all over Paris, and supply the city with water. They play at certain hours of the day, and the water is caught in buckets and barrels, and



sold by the poor to the rich. The Fontaine de Leda represents Jupiter in the shape of a swan approaching the pleased and astonished Leda. The water flows from the beak of the swan. The Fountain of Mars represents the Goddess of Health holding a draught of water to the lips of a dying soldier, who revives as he drinks. The fountain in the Place du Chatelet is a circular basin, from the centre of which springs a palm tree, encircled by statues representing Justice, Strength, Prudence, and Vigilance. On the shaft of the column are inscribed the names of Napoleon's conquests. The water issues from cornucopiæ, which terminate in fishes' heads. Above are heads representing the winds; in the midst is a globe, supported by a gilded statue of Victory. I have mentioned those of the fountains which particularly struck me; there are many others of equal beauty.

"I must not pass over without mention what we took delight in passing under a few days ago—the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, a vast central arch, ninety feet in height, graced by piers on either side supporting an entablature and attic. Upon a pedestal from each of these piers rise groups of allegorical figures. On the internal sides of the piers are inscribed the titles of victories won by France. The arch is pierced by a transversal arch, engraven with the names of great warriors. This arch was commenced by Napoleon, and finished by Louis Philippe. Within the monument, a staircase in each pier leads to three stories of apartments, as yet unappropriated to any use. After the nuptials of the Emperor with Marie Louise, the arch not being completed, an immense model in wood and canvas was erected, decorated, and illuminated. The

emperor, entering Paris, drove through in triumph with his bride.

“Paris is surrounded by *barrières*, to prevent the introduction of contraband goods. Some of them are very splendid edifices, resembling in form the Arc de l’Etoile — also called Barrière de l’Etoile. But these will scarcely interest you.

“The garden of the Tuileries, with its vast groves, its charming flower gardens, its fountains, its groups of statues lining every walk, you must often have heard described. I will but mention the classic groups before which we most frequently pause. One is composed of the chaste Lucretia, supported by her horror-stricken husband. Her young children are clinging to her robe, while she, with expiring breath, recounts her wrongs, and draws the dagger from her bleeding breast. My other favorite is Atalanta flying before Hippomenes — he flings the golden gifts of Venus at her feet to retard her flight, and wins the goal and the coy nymph for his own.

“With the Champs Elysées I was somewhat disappointed. To be sure, there are vast avenues of noble trees, which form pleasant and sheltered promenades; but the old women with their cake and apple stands, and the old men with one arm (supposed to be amputated) hidden in their coats, and a large black patch over one eye, and the numerous little terrestrial-looking *cafés*, remind one that this Elysium is but of the earth.

“The Bois de Boulogne, the famous rendezvous for duellists, is a large forest, always gay with splendid equipages and richly-dressed promenaders, and is the most fashionable drive in Paris.”

In spite of the gay life which we led in the French metropolis, my habits of study were not wholly abandoned. An Italian teacher paid me visits every morning, and the previous night's dissipations never prevented my taking a lesson before breakfast. Nor did I cease to find pleasure in writing. I commenced a little drama in six acts, (the peculiarities of the plot made five, as I thought, an impossible number,) designed for private representation. We were to give a *fête* on our return to America, and the play was to be enacted at Melrose by my sisters and myself. It was written in blank verse, (or, at least, what I imagined to be blank verse,) the scenery was painted by Parisian artists under my direction, and some of the principal dresses, which were exceedingly rich, were made by Parisian costumers. The play was entitled *Gulzara*, or the Persian Slave. It was nearly completed when we left Paris.

At Havre we took passage in the ship *Ville de Lyons*, under the command of Captain Stoddart, and sailed for America.

## CHAPTER VII.

*A Play without Heroes. — Rehearsals. — Incident in the Barn. — Gulzara, or the Persian Slave. — Publication of Play. — Critique from New World. — Fondness for Speculations. — Loss of Property and utter Ruin. — Musings in the Arbor. — My Sister Charlotte. — A Project. — Preparations for a new Career. — The last Farewell to a beloved Home.*

OUR sojourn in a foreign land had not rendered America less dear. Our own home never looked to me more beautiful than when, as I leaned from the carriage window, I beheld it through the long avenue of trees, after our fifteen months' absence. I pass over the joyous greetings of kindred and friends, and come to the *fête* which was to celebrate our return. The play was rapidly completed ; but I had had some formidable difficulties to overcome in its construction. We objected to admit gentlemen into our *corps dramatique*, — to say the least, their presence was an *inconvenience*, — yet our youthful company wished to avoid assuming male attire. I must write them a play without heroes. To suit these caprices I invented a plot, the scene of which was laid within the walls of a harem. Sultan Suliman, the hero, is absent in the wars, and though he in reality plays an important part in the drama, and is kept constantly in the minds of the audience, he never appears. His newly-purchased slave Gulzara is the heroine. The other characters are his daughter Zulieka, Fatima, her companion, Katinka, an attendant, and

*Screaming & fainting*

Ayesha, the villain of the piece, who has received a great wrong at the hands of the sultan, and, during his absence, seeks revenge. The only male character is that of the sultan's son Amurath, a boy ten years old. This character was written for little Julia, and I expended all the ability I possessed in making the part one that would afford ample scope for the display of her brilliant talents. It was a part in which she could fairly compete with Gulzara, (which I enacted,) and, as the sequel proved, could bear away the palm.

To facilitate rehearsals, our little *corps dramatique* were invited to take up their residence with me for a month previous to the representation of the play. Many an amusing incident broke in upon our preparations. During the rehearsal of certain scenes, we were invariably interrupted by sudden fits of laughter from the actors, and I could never get them through other scenes (one in particular) without allowing them to pause and weep; and these were not stage tears, but genuine outbursts of girlish feeling.

Screaming musically and fainting gracefully, we at first pronounced impossible accomplishments — heights of histrionic excellence not to be reached! To avoid alarming the rest of the family, we practised these portions of our art in an old barn at a distance from the house. Each one in turn would give a long, loud shriek, and the clearest sound was to be imitated by the character who had to scream. Then the fainting must be practised. We could fall upon beds of hay, but dared not trust ourselves to sink into each other's arms, for fear of a fall indeed. Amid shouts of laughter, we were one day making experiments in the most effective manner of becoming insensible, when an unexpected

peal of merriment, mingling with ours, sounded above our heads ! We looked up and beheld in the haylofts an assemblage of laborers, who had been enjoying unperceived our dramatic exercises, and could no longer restrain their mirth. With one accord our whole party took flight, and were seen in the barn no more.

It was my desire that the *fête* should be given upon our father's birthday ; but as Flatbush was four miles from New York, we were obliged to wait for moonlight nights, that our guests might not have a country drive in the dark.

Our Parisian scenery worked admirably. It was changed for each act. The most critical observer could hardly have found fault with the miniature theatre. We had all the appurtenances of the stage, even to footlights, and the regulations I instituted were tolerably systematic. I seemed to possess some intuitive knowledge of the mysteries of stage management. The night before that on which the play was to take place we had a dress rehearsal, and every one was, in stage parlance, "dead-letter perfect" in her part.

The *fête* day came. With the assistance of my young dramatic company, the house was profusely decorated with garlands of flowers. Bowers were formed out of forest trees cut down for the purpose, and vases, placed in every possible and *impossible* niche or corner, were filled with the plunder of the greenhouse and garden. Numerous friends contributed largely to this floral exhibition. When we commenced our labors in the morning, several tables were literally heaped with mountains of flowers. At night the avenue of trees leading to the house was brilliantly illuminated, and the moon we had politely waited for, in return,

courteously lent us her light. The guests assembled at an early hour, and were received by their host. The hostess was busied transforming herself into a Persian slave, and adorning the other inhabitants of the *se-raglio*.

At the hour designated in the programme, which had been enclosed in every invitation, an overture was played by a full band of music stationed in the hall. (We had to alter the usual locality of the orchestra.) The curtain rose upon a chamber in the harem, where sat Zulieka, embroidering, and Fatima at her feet. It seemed to me five minutes, though probably it was not more than one, before our Zulieka (my sister May) could gain courage to utter the first words of her part. When at last she spoke, it was in a low and trembling voice, scarcely audible. I held my breath until the sound fell on my ears, and drew it again with a sensation of inexpressible relief as her self-possession gradually returned. There was no laughing as at our rehearsals; and, when the actors persisted in crying, the audience kindly kept them company, and I did not chide as on former occasions. Every one played beyond my expectations, but the gem of the evening was the exquisite performance of little Julia as the sultan's son Amurath. Almost every sentence she uttered drew down genuine bursts of applause; and with the skill of a thorough artist, she made us laugh or weep at will while she retained her own composure. I exerted myself to the utmost in scenes where we played together, but my judgment told me that Amurath threw Gulzara into the shade.

As I stood upon the stage, the audience were so near us that I could see my father's noble form, his majestic

forehead, and snow-white hair. I could see his eyes fixed intently upon his children, in turn, and more than once my heart beat high as I saw him smile and bow with a flattered expression as some of our guests leaned forward to whisper their comments in his ears. Whenever Julia spoke, his face lighted up with an expression of almost rapture; and when I had impassioned lines to deliver, he would gaze at me thoughtfully, drinking in each word, as though he were weighing my power against hers.

The play lasted about two hours and a half, and then came to a happy termination. No untoward accident marred the smoothness of the representation. The scenery was rapidly removed, the theatre converted into a reception room, the ball room thrown open, and, in less than half an hour from the time when the curtain fell, the occupants of Sultan Suliman's seraglio were merrily threading the dance, without a trace of their late sorrows visible upon their countenances.

The play was afterwards published in the *New World*. Several very complimentary criticisms appeared, but as they were written by parties present at the performance, I must attribute them to the *couleur-de-rose* medium through which friendship is apt to look. There was one, however, written by the editor of the *New World*, which I quote as the most gratifying to me at the time, inasmuch as the writer was unacquainted with me, and, as I flattered myself, could have no bias inconsistent with critical impartiality:—

“The drama of *Gulzara*, or the Persian Slave, was written by a young lady lovely and accomplished. There is a unity and simplicity in its design and execution which cannot fail to give sincere pleasure. It is



pervaded by rare and delicate thought; many passages are strikingly beautiful; and the impartial critic will think, with us, that the drama would do credit to a much more experienced writer."

The ball I have just described was the last ever given at Melrose. The glorious sunset that closed on the days of our happiness ushered in but storms with the morrow.

From the time of our return to America, Mr. Mowatt was forced to abandon his profession, on account of the affection in his eyes. He could neither use them to read nor to write except for a few minutes at a time. He always had a fondness for speculations in land, stocks, &c., which, in the absence of other employment, grew into a fatal passion. He made great ventures, sometimes reaping large profits, sometimes meeting with heavy losses. Of these speculations I at first knew little or nothing, but I could not help noticing the fitful changes that came over his mental horizon.

At times he suffered from deep depression not natural to his temperament, while at other times he was elated to a degree that equally astonished me. In one of those crises which convulse the whole mercantile world, (I use the language which I heard him use to Mary Howitt,) he was utterly ruined. Almost the whole of his fortune was swept away in a few days. At first he concealed from me the serious nature of his losses, and it was long before I divined their extent. But our expenses must be retrenched — our mode of living altered — our country-home, to which I was so devotedly attached, must be sold!

This intelligence was communicated to me in the most gentle manner. As soon as I could recover from the

first bewildering shock, my earnest question to Mr. Mowatt was, "Is there no possible means of saving this house?"

"None that I can imagine," was his dejected answer.

"How long may we remain here?"

"A month perhaps — certainly not longer."

"And where shall we go?"

"Heaven knows!"

I had never before heard the sound of despair in his tones.

Misfortune sprinkles ashes on the head of the man, but falls like dew upon the heart of the woman, and brings forth germs of strength of which she herself had no conscious possession.

That afternoon I walked alone for a long time in the lovely arbor that had been erected for my pleasure. It was a magnificent day in autumn. The grapes were hanging in luxuriant purple clusters above my head. The setting sun could scarcely penetrate their leafy canopy of darkest, richest green. They seemed to typify abundance, peace, prosperity! Eve's "Must I leave thee, paradise?" found its echo in my innermost heart. I sat down in my favorite summer house, and strange thoughts came into my head. At first they were vague and wild, but out of the chaos gradually grew distinctness and order. I thought of my eldest sister Charlotte. Her gift was for miniature painting. When the rude storms of adversity had shipwrecked her husband, she had braved the opposition of her friends, of the world, and converted what had been a mere accomplishment into the means of support for herself and her children. In the Academy of Drawing at Paris she had been awarded a high prize amid hundreds of native

competitors, although her name was unknown. Toiling ever, but ever with a cheerful spirit, she had gone on her pilgrimage rejoicing — overcoming trials with patient endurance, and reaping a priceless reward in the midst of many struggles.

Were there no gracious gifts within my nature? Had I no talents I could use? Had a life made up of delightful associations and poetic enjoyments unfitted me for exertion? No — there was something strong within me that cried out, It had not! What, then, could I do to preserve our home? I had talents for acting — I could go upon the stage; but that thought only entered my mind to be instantly rejected. The idea of becoming a professional actress was revolting.

The elder Vandenhoff had just given a successful course of readings in New York. I had been present on several evenings. His hall was crowded, and his audiences were highly gratified. I could give public readings. I had often read before large assemblages of friends — that required not a little courage. With a high object in view, I should gain enough additional courage to read before strangers. True, I could not judge what actual powers I possessed, what amount of talent; but the praises to which I had listened could not *all* be mere flattery. I would not allow my thoughts to dwell for a moment on the possibility of failure. While I still sat in the little summer house, a bold resolution was suddenly formed. I reflected that

“Not fortune’s slave is man; our state  
Enjoins, while firm resolves await  
On wishes just and wise,  
That strenuous action follow both.”

I would read in public. I had long enough been the child of indulgence, ease, and pleasure. I would

“Wake up, and be doing,  
Life’s heroic ends pursuing.”

It was almost dark when my dreamings ended, and I returned to the house.

There were deep shadows upon the faces of Mr. Mowatt and my sister May, (who was still the beloved companion of our home,) as we three sat down to the tea table; but I was more than usually merry, and now and then succeeded in calling a smile to the lips of one or the other. Several times Mr. Mowatt looked at me in astonishment. It was for my sake far more than for his own that he lamented his reverses. He feared privations for me — not for himself. He valued his wealth because it had ministered to my comforts, surrounded me with luxuries, and fostered my tastes. His own enjoyments were of a simple nature. I answered his wondering glances with mysterious looks, and waited impatiently until my young sister retired. Then I told him of my musings in the arbor — of my hopes — of my convictions — of — could I but gain his consent — my fixed determination! His surprise was at first too great for him to offer any opposition. I made good use of this vantage ground gained, and overwhelmed him with arguments, until my confident spirit had so thoroughly infused itself into his, that he suggested but one objection — the delicacy of my health. I combated that by declaring, and with truth, that I felt an *inner* strength hitherto unknown. I was sure that strength would sustain me under all emergencies.

Midnight found us still discussing my new project;

but before I rose to retire, I had gained his consent. My slumbers were as peaceful that night as at the close of the calmest and happiest of the many happy days that had seen me sink to repose beneath that beloved roof.

Once determined upon my course, I lost no time in carrying my intentions into execution. The very next morning I made selections from favorite poets, — many of them the same that I had heard Vandenhoff read, — and commenced strengthening my voice by reading aloud for a couple of hours each day in the open air. I allowed myself one fortnight to make all necessary preparations for my new and hazardous career.

I shrank from appearing in New York in the midst of my own extensive circle of relatives and friends. I did not desire the support which they might have yielded through personal sympathy. My powers could only be justly tested among strangers. Boston had been pronounced the most intellectual city of the Union — the American Athens. There is always more leniency towards the efforts of a novice where there is true taste. I would make my first appearance in Boston. A literary friend, to whom Mr. Mowatt confided our intentions, furnished us with valuable letters of introduction. Their influence, while it could not insure my success, would command for me a favorable hearing.

Every day I practised my voice, reciting aloud for hours in the vine-covered arbor, where I had cast aside the dark mantle of despair, and put on the life-giving robes of hope. I was greatly encouraged to find how rapidly every tone was strengthened, with what increasing enthusiasm I read, and how a confidence in my own success sprang up at these auguries.

It was a most trying duty to make my intended *début* known to my family. My sister May was, of course, the first in whom I confided. She was of a gentle and timid nature, and shrank in alarm from the proposed public step. She could not discuss it without tears and violent emotion.

"You *cannot* go through with it—I am sure you cannot!" were her weeping exclamations.

"We none know what we *can* do until we are tried," was the truism with which I answered her objection.

"What will our friends say of you if you make a public appearance?" she urged.

"What will our friends *do* for us in case I do not? Will they preserve to us this sweet home? Will they support us? Will they even sympathize with our adversity?"

"But you will lose your position in society."

"If I *fail*, probably I shall; but I do not intend to fail. And what is that position in society worth when we are no longer able to feast and entertain? How many of those whom we feasted and entertained at our last ball will seek us out when we live in poverty and obscurity?"

"If you would only look at all the obstacles!"

"No, I am looking above and beyond them, and I only see duty in their place."

Young as my sister was, she saw the force of my arguments, and sorrowed in silence.

The sight of her anguish affected me so much that I had not courage to seek my father and make the necessary communication to him. His opposition, should he oppose my wishes, would inevitably paralyze my strength. I wrote to him, and entreated that he would

not dishearten me — not throw a clog upon my efforts by his disapproval. This letter was not to be delivered until the day when we started for Boston.

That day soon came. About an hour before the time when it was necessary for us to leave, I went into my sister's room, and found her greatly agitated. "Come, May, let us bid good by to the dear, old place, and pray that we may soon return and be as happy as ever."

She put her arms about me, and we walked into the garden. For the last time we gathered flowers from our favorite plants — plants many of which we had ourselves put in earth and helped to tend. From the garden we went to the greenhouse. Near the door was a heliotrope, some two feet high, which had grown from a sprig that had been taken by Mr. Mowatt from my hair. It was covered with deliciously-fragrant blossoms, and from them we added to our bouquets. Then we walked through the arbor to the summer house, and sat there for a few sweet minutes; then strolled to the orchards beyond, into the lane that ran by the grounds. Then we went to the stables and caressed our ponies, especially Queen Mab, and bade farewell to our dogs and our many pets. Through every room of the house we passed, and with lingering looks of love we bade each adieu. My sister was weeping, but I could not shed a tear. I had been full of hope until this moment but now a solemn sensation came over me and whispered this farewell was our last — for I should never enter that house again as its mistress! I never did.

We were standing in the old-fashioned room where our little play had been performed, and talking over the

pleasures of that eventful night, when the carriage came to the door. Hurriedly we took our seats.

"Take care of the flowers," was the parting injunction to our faithful French gardener, who, with a sad face, stood waiting to bid us adieu. "*Que le bon Dieu vous benisse !*" was his fervent reply, and the carriage drove rapidly away.

We left my sister, with the letter she had to deliver, at our father's door ; and, without waiting to see any of the family, drove to the boat which started for Boston.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*Boston. — Mrs. B——s. — A Ball-room Acquaintance converted into a staunch Friend. — Boston Friendships. — Morning at the Temple. — Heartsickness. — The old Doorkeeper's Encouragement. — My Father's Letter. — Inherited Traits. — First Appearance in public. — Sensations. — A first Success. — Second and third Readings. — Lenient Critics. — Reading in Providence. — The Missing Ship. — Readings in New York. — Falling away of old Friends. — Reading at Rutgers Institute for Young Ladies. — Readings at Society Library. — Illness. — Article in Ladies' Companion. — Mrs. Osgood's Poem. — Imitators. — Offer of Park Theatre. — Letter from Professor Hows.*

As I look back, I can scarcely believe it possible that in Boston, where now I am bound by so many close, strong ties of friendship, I had then but *one* acquaintance — an acquaintance casually formed in the ball rooms of Paris. Mrs. B——s called upon me as soon as my arrival in Boston was published. I had known her merely as a woman of fashion, chasing the butterfly pleasure, even as I was doing, in Parisian *salons*. But now that I had a more earnest, a higher pursuit, —

“All

Her falser self slipped from her like a robe,” —

and she came to me in her true guise. It was the woman of soul that greeted me, full of tender sympathies and eager interest — lamenting our misfortunes, and ready to act the part of a devoted friend. She encouraged me in my undertaking — enlisted in my behalf the good wishes of her large circle of acquaintances —

brought a number of them to introduce to me — and exerted herself to the utmost to insure a crowded audience to my first reading. She herself took one hundred tickets. I was strengthened and cheered by her untiring kindness; her hearty enthusiasm gave me new faith in my own success. Beyond price, at that moment, was such a friend; and the impetus which she gave to my first efforts had their effect upon my whole career.

Our letters of introduction brought us into communication with many delightful and some distinguished persons. Their interest in my novel undertaking was easily awakened, and their inspiring influence hemmed me around until I seemed to stand within a magic circle, guarded, as by a charm, from all inharmonious existences. The friendships formed at that period have been among the most enduring and most valued of my life.

We had only spent a couple of days in Boston when all the arrangements for my first appearance were satisfactorily completed. I was to read at the Masonic Temple for three successive nights. The evening of my *début* was announced, and courteous editorial notices, bespeaking a fair hearing, appeared in all the principal papers.

The day before that on which I was to make my *début* I visited the temple, and with a throbbing heart ascended the rostrum which I was to occupy during the readings. I tried my voice, to learn whether it had compass enough to fill the capacious hall. Mr. Mowatt and an old doorkeeper (who treated me in the most paternal and encouraging manner) were my only auditors. Yet it was with difficulty that I could speak in so singular a situation. The words came gaspingly forth, and I seemed to have lost all variety of intona-

tion. I grew sick at heart. If my courage evaporated before an imaginary audience, how could I hope for presence of mind to carry me through the duties I had imposed upon myself when I stood in the presence of an actual crowd? I made effort after effort to recite, but my voice was choked — I could scarcely utter a word. I sat down upon the steps of the rostrum, overwhelmed with doubts and fears, which rushed like freshets over my heart, and swept away all its bright fabrics. I could not weep, — I was too miserable for tears, — and I could not listen to consolation.

“You’re only a bit nervous,” said the old doorkeeper, comfortingly; “you’ll get over that. I’ve seen great speakers look just as pale and frightened as you do now when they got on this stand here — but they soon warmed up; and there’s nothing to be afraid of.”

Still I would not be consoled. I could only remember that, if I failed, disgrace was added to our other ruin. The monster, Self-mistrust, had entered my mind, and was rapidly rooting up all its new and giant growths.

We returned to the hotel. Cards, kind notes, and bouquets were awaiting me. One note was from Judge Story, written in the most encouraging strain; another from the poet Longfellow, apologizing for not calling, on the plea of illness. I was dispiritedly putting them aside when a letter was handed me. It was from my father. I had scarcely courage to break the seal. If his disapprobation were added to my present dejection, my failure was certain. The first words reassured me — my father had pondered well upon the course I proposed to pursue, and he gave my efforts not merely his sanction, but his heartiest approval. He bade me never lose sight of the motive I had in view; and, with its

help, my talents (as he was pleased to call them) would enable me to achieve a triumph. He gave me his own blessing, and assured me that, as far as I was actuated by a sense of duty, I should win the blessing of Heaven also.

An indomitable energy and perseverance had characterized all the actions of my father's life. I inherited these traits from him, and with them a faculty for happiness that struck out the slender vein of gold in the drossiest earth of circumstance. As I read his letter, my whole nature was quickened by an influx, as it were, from his strong, never-weary, and ever-buoyant spirit. All my hopes returned, and from that moment my courage never wavered.

The sun shone brightly upon the morning of my *début*. The heavens seemed to smile benignantly upon my undertaking. That nothing might disturb my composure, I refused to receive visitors, and passed the day quietly in my own chamber.

Evening found me calm and strong of heart. I entered the carriage that bore me to the temple, not more agitated to outward appearance than if I had been hastening to a ball.

I had resisted all entreaties to wear any rich attire, and was dressed in simple white muslin, a white rose in my bosom, and another in my hair. I wore no ornaments.

In the retiring room of the temple we found several gentlemen, the warmest among our new friends, awaiting us. A painful anxiety was depicted in their faces. Well might they have wondered at the almost stony calmness of mine. They told me that the temple was crowded with one of the most fashionable audiences ever assembled within its walls. They entreated me to re-

tain my self-possession, and poured into my ears words of sympathy and encouragement, which, in the abstraction of that moment, I scarcely heard.

They remained with us until the clock struck half past seven, the hour at which I was announced to appear. "Do not keep the audience waiting. Bostonians dislike nothing more!" said Mr. F——s, as he shook my hand, and, accompanied by the other gentlemen, left the room to take his seat in the temple.

Two minutes more, and I was within view of the audience. Mr. Mowatt led me to the foot of the rostrum, but I ascended the steps alone. I remember courtesying slightly, half stunned by the repeated rounds of applause, the blaze of light, the dense crowd of faces all turned towards me. I sat down by the table that held my books, and mechanically opened the one from which I was to read. I rose with it in my hand. Again came the bursts of applause — the hall swam and then grew dark before me — I could not see the book that I held open in my hand — my veins were filled with ice — I seemed to myself transformed into a statue. Although I still stood, I could not, for a few seconds, have been more unconscious in a state of complete inanition.

The opening piece I had selected was the introduction to Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and the first words I had to utter were, —

"The way was long, the wind was cold."

I could deliver the line feelingly, indeed, for I was shivering violently, and weary and long seemed the way I had just entered.

At length, in an uncertain voice, I commenced to

read. Long before I had half finished the poem, my self-possession returned — a genial warmth displaced the icy chill, my voice grew loud and clear, and I found it easy to divest myself of all consciousness of the audience. I began also to become accustomed to the applause which at first oppressed and frightened me. I went through the various selections in order, and without betraying any further emotion.

When half the entertainment was over, there was an intermission of ten minutes, and I was at liberty to withdraw into the retiring room. There I was greeted by a host of friends, all loud in their congratulations, and a note from my faithful ally, Mrs. B——s, told me of the delight of her party, and assured me of my perfect success.

With renewed spirit I reascended the rostrum, and read the concluding poems with as much ease as I should have done to a select party of friends in my own drawing room.

At the hotel a fresh assemblage awaited me. I was overwhelmed with new congratulations and prophecies of a brilliant career — a career that would accomplish all that I had so much at heart. My deep joy transported me to the grape-hung bower. I stood there in thought, exclaiming, "Our home is secured; I am mistress here still!"

It was past midnight before our visitors took their leave and allowed me to retire. When I was once more alone, when my full heart could offer up its grateful thanks, I could weep again. What woman does not know the delicious relief of tears — the terrible privation when the eyes remain burning and unmoistened through suffering and trial? They were the

first tears I had shed since the day when I was told of the complete wreck of our fortunes. The future now seemed so bright before me, that, in my ignorance of the world, I anticipated no difficulties, no drawbacks, no rebuffs. I saw but roses in the pathway of life's journey. I had yet to learn that sharp-edged flints are scattered on the road, to lacerate the feet of those who walk not in the trodden ways.

The next night I read again to an equally large and enthusiastic audience — and again on the third night to the same crowd, and was greeted with the same unmistakable tokens of approval. I was no longer in the slightest degree embarrassed. I felt as though I were reading to an audience of indulgent friends, who were determined to be pleased with my most imperfect efforts. So, in fact, they were. A spirit of chivalry towards a countrywoman evidently existed among the gentlemen. Mr. W——e's characteristic remark on the subject was, "There is not a man in the temple that wouldn't fight for you!"

The critics dealt with me tenderly, as with a spoiled child whom Boston had suddenly adopted and was determined to protect. The papers teemed with notices; but they were eulogiums, not critiques. By common consent, it seemed to be decided that I was to be exempt from criticism.

I was warmly pressed to remain and give a second course of readings; but I was now anxious to return to New York. We took our departure from Boston with a promise of speedy return.

In passing through Providence, I read one night to a crowded audience. During the recitation of the *Missing Ship*, written for me by Epes Sargent, and descrip-

tive of the loss of the steamship *President*, a lady present was so deeply moved that she was carried from the hall in violent hysterics. This poem proved one of the most valuable in my *repertoire*, for it never failed to impress an audience. The *Light of the Lighthouse*, by the same author, (which I afterwards frequently read in public,) was equally effective in the recitation. I made my selections as often as possible from American poets.

From Providence we went to New York, and a course of readings for four nights was announced to take place at the Stuyvesant Institute. Curiosity drew me full audiences; but I did not feel as though Sympathy sat side by side with Curiosity, as she had done in Boston. I found it more difficult to read impressively than I had done before my indulgent New England audiences. The sphere seemed different, the recipients less impressible. I could not feel the same easy *abandon* — the utter freedom from constraint. I had too many personal friends constantly present, and I thought too much of what the Mrs. Grundies were saying.

My father's delight and pride, warmly and openly expressed, compensated me for the sufferings inflicted by others — sufferings for which I was wholly unprepared. Some beloved relatives, and some who had been my nearest, dearest friends, — friends from my early childhood, who were associated in my mind with all the sweetest, happiest hours of my life, — now turned from me. They were shocked at my temerity in appearing before the public. They even affected not to believe in Mr. Mowatt's total loss of means. They tacitly proscribed me from the circle of their acquaintance. When



we passed in the street, instead of the outstretched hand and loving greeting to which I had ever been accustomed, I met the cold eye and averted face that shunned recognition.

I may now revert without bitterness to this sad era in my life; for time, circumstances, and (to speak the whole truth) a succession of brilliant successes have now reunited the bright and once broken links. All those whom I truly prized, in the course of years, allowed their affection and kinder judgment to overcome worldly prejudices. They generously gave me back the place I once held in their hearts. Nor had I the right to complain because I was for a season misunderstood. They but followed their convictions, as I mine. *My* love for *them* had never varied, and

“If I had angered any among them, my own life was sore;  
If I fell from their presence, I clung to their memory more;  
Their tender I often felt holy, their bitter I sometimes called  
sweet;  
And whenever their heart has refused me, I fell down straight  
at their feet!”

Under the heavy pressure of mental suffering, added to the exhaustion produced by unusual exertions, my health gave way. After fulfilling the course at the Stuyvesant Institute, I became seriously ill, and was forced to make several postponements of the time announced for my reading before the Rutger's Institute for Young Ladies. When I was scarcely convalescent, I read there one night. The hall was filled with an assemblage of lovely-looking young girls, and their evident enjoyment inspired me to read with more energy and feeling than I had done since my nights in Boston. The effort cost me a relapse of some weeks. Again I

rallied, and gave a course of four nights' readings at the Society Library. I met with the same success as before, but my strength was overtaxed. The continued coldness of some of my dearest friends preyed upon my mind, and threw me into a state of morbid nervous excitement. I was attacked with fever and hemorrhages of the lungs. For several months I was considered by my physician, Dr. C——g, in a state which rendered recovery very improbable.

I had not been treated by the New York press with the same courteous leniency as by that of Boston. Some of the leading papers were warm in their encomiums — others contained most just criticisms, pointing out faults of style of which I was myself gradually becoming conscious. Others condemned *in toto* the bold and novel step I had taken, ignoring its motive.

One article appeared in the Ladies' Companion, written by a lady contributor of high literary standing, severely denouncing my course, and suggesting that, if public readings must be given, I should read before an audience entirely of my own sex! It was a rather comical idea that the gentlemen were to be left at the door with the canes and umbrellas; and yet the lady who wrote this singularly one-sided article is a gifted and estimable person.

But if one woman of literary standing wrote thus, another of true genius and well-deserved fame poured the balm of her poetic spirit into the wound. The lamented Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, after attending one of the readings, addressed to me the following poem, the genuine expression of her truly womanly nature: —

## TO ANNA CORA MOWATT,

*(On hearing her read.)*

BY FRANCES S. OSGOOD.

Ne'er heed them, Cora, dear,  
The carping few, who say  
Thou leavest woman's holier sphere  
For light and vain display.

'Tis false as *thou* art *true* !  
They need but look on thee,  
But watch thy young cheek's varying hue,  
A *purser* hope to see.

I too, Cora, sooth to say,  
When first I heard thy name,  
In fancy saw a being bold,  
Who braved the wide world's blame.

I took my seat among  
The crowd, in thoughtless glee,  
To list the gifted *poet's* song,  
With little heed for *thee* !

But suddenly a sound,  
A murmur of surprise,  
And fresh delight ran deepening round :  
I coldly raised my eyes ; —

A being young and fair,  
In purest white arrayed,  
With timid grace tripped down the stair,  
Half eager, half afraid !

As on the misty height  
Soft blushes young Aurora,  
She dawned upon our dazzled sight,  
Our graceful, *modest* Cora !

The loveliest hair of gold  
That ever woman braided,

In glossy ringlets, richly rolled,  
Brow, neck, and bosom shaded.

No jewel lit the tress,  
No ornament she wore,  
But, robed as simply as a child,  
She won our worship more.

The glowing gold and gems  
Of Fashion's proud attire  
Were nothing to her cheeks' soft bloom  
And her eyes' azure fire !

Forth from those pure blue eyes,  
As from a starry portal,  
A soul looked out and spoke to ours,  
With beauty more than mortal.

But even applause was hushed,  
When, from her lips of love,  
That voice of wondrous music gushed,  
Now soft as murmuring dove —

Now calm in proud disdain —  
Now wild with joyous power —  
Indignant now — as pleasure, pain,  
Or anger rule the hour.

High in the listener's soul,  
In tune, each passion swells ;  
We weep, we smile, 'neath her control,  
As 'neath a fairy's spells.

O, while such power is thine  
To elevate, subdue,  
Believe thy mission half divine,  
Nor heed the carping few !

And, Cora ! falter not,  
Though critics cold may say  
Thou leavest woman's holier lot  
For vain and light display.

My success gave rise to a host of lady imitators, one of whom announced "Readings and Recitations in the Style of Mrs. Mowatt." I was rather curious to get an idea of my own style, and, had my health permitted, would have gone some distance to have seen it illustrated. At one time there were no less than six advertisements in the papers, of ladies giving readings in different parts of the Union.

My first course of readings in New York was accidentally attended by one of the managers of the Park Theatre, who, through a friend, made me a highly lucrative proposal if I would appear upon the stage. I well remember the indignant reply I gave the gentleman who communicated to me this offer. The recollection of that answer has often rendered me forbearing towards those who I have since heard violently denounce the stage, and who were as ignorant as I was at that period of every thing that related to a theatre.

Amongst the testimonials of interest which were called forth by my readings, one of those which I most highly appreciated was a complimentary letter from Professor Hows — perhaps one of the most finished elocutionists of the day. My personal acquaintance with that gentleman did not commence until a later period.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Mesmerism. — The Phenomenon of Double Consciousness. — Somnambule Incidents. — Townshend. — Miss Martineau's Misuse of Mesmeric Facts. — First Acquaintance with the Writings of Swedenborg. — Influence of New Church Doctrines. — Joining the Church. — Four Sisters also becoming Members. — Writings of my eldest Sister. — Letter on Mesmeric Somnambulism. — Revisiting former Residence. — Lenox. — The Sedgwicks. — Friendships with School Girls. — Getting up of Miss Sedgwick's Play. — Crowning of their Stage Manager by the Scholars. — Conversations with Rev. Dr. William Ellery Channing. — The Future Life.*

THE illness which I mentioned in the preceding chapter was of long duration. As a faithful historian, fulfilling a trust, I cannot omit the narration of events which were produced by that illness. But I allude to them with reluctance — a reluctance which has perhaps no reasonable foundation.

Dr. C——g, of New York, was called in to attend me. He considered my state dangerous. On the occasion of his first visit, after numerous inquiries in regard to my symptoms, he turned to Mr. Mowatt, and said, "If she is susceptible to mesmerism, I think she can be relieved more readily than by any medicine that I could administer."

Mr. Mowatt had not any knowledge of mesmerism, nor had I. We had never seen a mesmeric subject — never heard a case fully described. He strongly objected to my being made the subject of an experiment. An argument ensued which I did not hear. It ended

in Dr. C——g's assurance that I might be greatly benefited by mesmeric treatment, but could not be injured. Mr. Mowatt finally assented to the doctor's proposition. I was suffering too much to express an opinion, or even to have one.

When Dr. C——g first proposed to mesmerize me, I was reclining in an arm chair. The doctor now placed himself in front of me. I remember his making what are called "passes" before my eyes. Very soon my head grew slightly dizzy — the room seemed filled with a dim haziness — the objects began to dance and float, and then to disappear. I recollect nothing further.

I was afterwards told that in less than twenty minutes I fell into a very deep sleep, from which I suddenly emerged into a state of somnambulic consciousness. A similar deep sleep, I am assured, always subsequently preceded my state of mesmeric somnambulism. It was the drawbridge separating the waking from the "sleep-waking" state, over which I had inevitably to pass. Even when I had become so sensitive to the mesmeric influence that I could be put by it into the somnambulic state in less than a quarter of a minute, I am told there would be, to outward appearance, an absolute insensibility and suspension of all consciousness for an interval of several seconds, during which, if standing at the time, I would fall to the ground, unless supported. On entering the somnambulic state, thus induced by mesmerism, I am further informed I would be entirely unconscious of the presence of other parties than the magnetizer, until they were *put in communication* with me by him; and that often I was subjected to much pain, and even thrown into convulsive shudderings, by being inconsiderately touched by persons *not in communication*.

It should be stated that, from childhood, I had been occasionally addicted to natural somnambulism, and had repeatedly been known to walk and talk in my sleep. It is said that persons of this habit are especially susceptible of the mesmeric influence.

In regard to my first mesmeric trance, I must rely solely upon the testimony of others as to what transpired during its continuance. I had, and still have, no conscious recollection whatever in regard to its experiences. I can only repeat what I was told by those whose good faith and accuracy I cannot distrust.

On being awakened from the state of somnambulism, I felt very much relieved and refreshed. The fever from which I had been suffering had nearly left me, and my head, which had ached incessantly for three days, was free from pain. I had slept between two and three hours.

Mr. Mowatt and the doctor now amused themselves by relating some of the fantastic remarks which I had made while somnambulant. I began to think that I was the victim of a joke. Was it possible that I had been, but a few minutes previous, in a separate state of consciousness, during which I had talked, laughed, (laughed at my waking self, I was told!) and that, of it all, I could not bring away the faintest inkling of remembrance? Yet such, I am forced to believe, was the wonderful truth. I could with difficulty be persuaded that my trance was not a merely natural sleep, into which I had accidentally fallen. The physical relief produced did not strike me as remarkable, as I had been unable to sleep before for several days and nights.

To mesmerism, under Heaven, I must believe I was subsequently indebted more than once for relief from a



prostration which no other human agency could have prevented from ending in dissolution.

Dr. C——g attended me daily, and continued to use mesmerism as the most powerful agent in my restoration. I soon grew impatient at this *apparent* surrender of free will — one of Heaven's choicest gifts to man. I was annoyed at being told that I had spoken, done, or written things of which I had no recollection. Numerous poems were placed in my hands, which, I was informed, I had improvised as rapidly as they could be taken down, the subjects having been given haphazard by any person present. It was no particular gratification to be assured that I had never produced any thing as good before. Nor was it any consolation to be told that in sleep-waking I was far more sensible, more interesting, and more amiable than in my ordinary state. With womanly perverseness, I preferred my every-day imperfection to this mysterious and incomprehensibly brought about superiority. For the former I was at least responsible — to the latter I could lay no conscious claim.

I say *conscious* claim; though it must be admitted that there may be *separate states of consciousness*. In the phenomena of this separation, the student of human nature may, I believe, find the clew to momentous truths. The essential facts in ordinary somnambulism will not be denied except by those awfully rigorous inquirers who will accept nothing which they cannot weigh, gauge, and handle, and who are quite as likely to be deceived as the most credulous, inasmuch as the scepticism which admits too little is as liable to mistake as the marvellous propensity which admits too much. But if pretenders to science will not grant it, common

experience and common sense *will*, that a person in somnambulism may hold long and rational conversations, and perform acts, of which he will have no recollection whatever in his waking state. Let him again pass, however, into somnambulism, and he can recall every thing that he ever experienced in that state.

It would seem, from this common and undeniable phenomenon, as if there were an inner consciousness occupying a higher plane than the external, and commanding a more extensive prospect — a consciousness undeveloped in most minds except by *flashes*, and retiring within itself before the external can distinctly realize its presence.

How shall we account for the thick veil of separation, dropped at once by the cessation of somnambulism (whether independent or induced by mesmerism) between the normal and abnormal — the external and internal consciousness? An analogy drawn from intoxication or insanity is not precisely applicable here; for, under somnambulism, one may be as calm and rational, and as completely in possession of all his faculties, as ever in his waking state; nay, those faculties may be considerably quickened and exalted. And yet a wave of the mesmerizer's hand will bring the subject back from the higher to the lower every-day consciousness, where all that he has been saying, and doing in his somnambulic state is an utter blank! Another wave of the hand, — or an access of natural somnambulism, entirely independent of mesmerism, — and lo! all the knowledge of the former state is restored, as if a curtain had been lifted.

Townshend mentions an illustrative instance of the wonderful separation of these states in the case of

E. A., a French youth, whom he was in the habit of mesmerizing. When awake, E. A. entertained infidel opinions of the worst kind. "I asked him once, in his waking state," writes Townshend, "what he thought became of us after death; and his answer was, '*Dès qu'on est mort, on n'est plus rien du tout.*' In sleep-waking all this was changed. His ideas of the mind were correct, and singularly opposed to the material views he took of all questions when in the waking state. 'Can the soul ever die?' I asked. 'Certainly not. It is the soul which is the only true existence, and which gives existence to all we apprehend.' Under mesmeric sleep-waking, all the hard incredulity which characterized E. A. when awake was gone. His wilfulness was become submission, his pride humility. Often would he regret the errors of his waking hours."

Instances similar to the above are numerous. Truly, "we are wiser than we know." In the mind of the most stubborn materialist there may be an inner consciousness giving the lie to his outward unbelief—a consciousness which may be developed in some tremendous moment, perhaps in "the last of earth," to confound and overwhelm him, and to raze, as by a lightning flash, his edifices of intellectual pride and presumption. Georget, a distinguished French physician, and author of several scientific works advocating the broadest materialism, was converted to a conviction of his error by witnessing the phenomena of somnambulism. Dying, he left a formal recantation of his philosophy, and his last moments were brightened by the serenest confidence in an hereafter for the soul.

If ever the "livery of Heaven" was stolen "to serve the devil in," it has been done by Miss Martineau,

and her ally, Mr. Atkinson, in their late atheistical work, in which they undertake to make some of the facts of mesmerism and somnambulism subservient to the cause of blank atheism and unbelief. I can say it boldly, that, so far as I have been permitted to bring impressions and recollections (which the magnetizer, by an act of his will, may *let in* to the waking consciousness of the somnambule) from my own ample somnambulist experience, (far ampler and more extraordinary than any which Miss Martineau, according to her own showing, has either experienced herself or witnessed in others,) they contradict, most emphatically, not only all her atheistical conclusions, but many of the loosely-assumed facts on which these are based.

There is one passage in her work, which indicates such an extent of fatuity, such an ignorance of the actual phenomena from which she professes to reason, and such an absurd anticipation of great results from a cause ridiculously inadequate and inoperative, that I must be pardoned for quoting it: "The knowledge," she says, "which mesmerism gives of the influence of body on body, and consequently of mind on mind, *will bring about a morality we have not yet dreamed of*. And who shall disguise his nature and his acts when we cannot be sure at any moment that we are free from the *clairvoyant* eye of some one who is observing our actions and most secret thoughts, and our whole character and history may be read off at any moment?"

Here is a substitute for the omniscient eye — such a substitute, alas! as no healthy mind could ever have seriously suggested, even supposing the capacity of human *clairvoyance* to be what Miss Martineau imagines. Let conscience (she substantially tells us)

once rid itself of a belief in God and a future state, and it will be kept right by the fancy that there may be some obscure somnambulist — we will suppose in Oregon, in Hindostan, or nearer home — perhaps some poor, feeble, little woman — who *may* have the power and intention of scanning our actions and thoughts! What a substitute have we here for a belief in a just and benevolent God! what an agency for bringing about “a morality we have not yet dreamed of”! Alas! that any person of intelligence — above all, that a woman — should, from her intellectual “pride of place,” fall into such a wretched “slough of despond” as this, and persuade herself that it is a bed of flowers!

If Miss Martineau knows any thing accurately of *clairvoyance*, she must know that its recognitions are almost always involuntary — flashing and vanishing like the lightning. Instances of *clairvoyance*, *originated and sustained at will*, are so rare, that I have heard of no one case in which any of the numerous offers of money for *clairvoyant* readings of concealed writings has been accepted.

I could mention many instances in which Miss Martineau has entirely misapprehended or misstated the phenomena of mesmerism, — in which she has assumed, from the vaguest and most questionable premises, the most momentous and unwarrantable conclusions, — on a subject, too, involving the peace of mind of thousands. But this is not the place for such a discussion. In dragging the facts of somnambulism to the support of her dismal creed, she has recklessly and mischievously turned them from their most obvious and legitimate service. Give me such evidence of powers transcending the mortal senses as they supply, and the

whole tribe of atheists, from Lucretius to Atkinson, can no more shake my faith in spiritual things — in a heavenly Father and an immortal soul — than they can persuade me that heat and light proceed, not from the sun of our system, but from the ice at the north pole.

Let me commend to Miss Martineau the following true and eloquent passage by one of her own countrymen, the author of Church and State: "Try to conceive a *man* without the ideas of God, eternity, freedom, will, absolute truth; of the good, the true, the beautiful, the infinite. An *animal*, endowed with a memory of appearances and facts, might remain; but the *man* will have vanished, and you have instead a creature more subtle than any beast of the field; upon the belly must it go, and dust must it eat all the days of its life!"

Ah, no! It is not to such a degradation that a knowledge of the *real* facts of somnambulism would lead us. They have none of that vapor of the charnel house about them which Miss Martineau's imagination would impart. They are all of a cheering, elevating, and inspiring character. They lift our thoughts ever to another and a better life — to heaven, and to anticipations

"Of all that is most beauteous, imaged there  
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,  
An ampler ether, a diviner air,  
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;  
Climes which the sun, that sheds the brightest day  
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey." \*

The question, "whether the soul thinks always," is decided by Locke in the negative, on the ground that

\* Wordsworth.

after-consciousness is the only testimony we can have of the mind's activity ; and that, since we are by no means *conscious* that we think always, we ought not to assume that we *do* think always. I believe, with Townshend, that in this notion Locke was fundamentally wrong ; for, equally with Townshend's somnambulist, I have the testimony of my fellow-beings that the state which, once ended, appeared a blank to me, was, in truth, "marked by energy and activity of the highest order."

On one point I felt a degree of satisfaction — though, perhaps, it was only a proof of my natural obstinacy. They told me that I was what is called an *independent somnambulist* ; and that I could, at any time, defeat the will of the mesmerizer, unless I chose to submit. It was also told me that my reasoning faculties were singularly developed under somnambulism, and that I often maintained opinions at variance with those of the mesmerizer and of others with whom I was in communication, especially on religious subjects. These opinions I could not be forced to relinquish by arguments, or even through the exertion of a superior will.

This brings me to another circumstance of somewhat graver interest. While I was in a somnambulic state, Mr. Mowatt often conversed with me alone for hours together. Religion was the subject upon which he most frequently dwelt. His mind had naturally a strong sceptical tendency, confirmed by a system of education miscalled philosophical. In what manner his favorite theories were overturned, and his belief in revealed religion established, I do not understand ; I only know that there was a downfall of the olden fabric, and a foundation laid for the new. While his religious views

were undergoing a total revolution, he encountered in the street Dr. W——y, an old and esteemed friend. The doctor naturally inquired after my health. In reply, Mr. Mowatt related the singular events of the last few days — his own deep impressions and consequent change of feeling.

“Mrs. Mowatt must have read Swedenborg’s works,” said Dr. W——y; “for those are the doctrines Swedenborg promulgates.”

Mr. Mowatt replied that this could not be the case, “as all my reading, since I was fifteen years old, had been known to him.”

He was right. I had never read a line of Swedenborg’s writings — I had never heard his doctrines mentioned.

Dr. W——y requested Mr. Mowatt to ask me certain questions the next time I was in a somnambulist state, and to let him know the replies.

I have often heard what these questions were, but cannot trust my memory to repeat them with accuracy.

The questions were asked, and the answers returned to Dr. W——y. His reply upon hearing them was, “Those are the doctrines revealed through Swedenborg.”

“Who is Swedenborg? What are his doctrines? Where shall I find a church in which they are taught? How shall I obtain his writings?” were Mr. Mowatt’s eager inquiries.

Dr. W——y was himself an earnest New Churchman, and gave the required information.

The next Sunday Mr. Mowatt went to hear Mr. Barrett, a New Church minister, preach. My indisposition



still confined me to the house. I asked him how he liked the sermon, and what it was about. He answered that he hardly knew how he liked it, though he had never listened to a sermon with so much interest in his life. He should certainly attend the New Church again.

The next day he procured several volumes of Swedenborg's works. They were in large, old-fashioned print; but Mr. Mowatt's eyes were still so much affected that he could only read for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour at a time.

I used to feel troubled to see him, day after day, poring over these huge volumes at the risk of ruining his eyesight; but the knowledge for which he thirsted brought him too much happiness for any remonstrances to be heeded. While I remained ill, I felt an indifference almost amounting to aversion towards the writings of Swedenborg, and invariably grew weary when they were discussed. As I became stronger, I resumed my usual occupation of reading aloud to Mr. Mowatt. He did not care to listen to any author but Swedenborg; and therefore from Swedenborg's works I read. My interest was quickly awakened. I read with avidity; and involuntarily, from an internal conviction, as it were, accepted the doctrines. I never had a doubt to combat. Sometimes it seemed to me as though I had known all that was there revealed — believed it all before — only I had never deliberately thought on the subject.

With the full acceptance of New Church doctrines came

“The cheerful faith, that all which we behold  
Is full of blessings.”

All things in life wore a different aspect. I realized that the things which befall us in time had no true importance except as they regarded eternity. Whatever we received from above was *good*, whether it came in the shape of prosperity or misfortune, for it was but a means to fit us for our future states. It became easy to perceive that the most trivial of

“ Our daily joys and pains advance  
To a divine significance.”

Life's trials lost all their bitterness.

As I have no intention of discussing New Church doctrines, I pass over our first acquaintance with ministers and members of the church, and other circumstances in the same connection.

In six months more we had both made open confession of our belief, and become members of the New Church. One by one, four of my sisters (but none of them in the slightest degree influenced by me) were baptized before the same altar, and communed at the same table. Our eldest, Mrs. William Turner, who was unquestionably the profoundest thinker and best reasoner, had been for many years a communicant in the Episcopal church. Great opposition was made by her religious friends to her open change of faith. She made an able defence of her conduct in two volumes, published in New York, the one entitled “Reasons for joining the New Church, by a Member of the Episcopal Church;” and the other, “Points of Difference between the New and Old Church.” The latter of these was reprinted in London without my sister's knowledge, and had an extensive circulation.

To return to my mesmeric experiences. “I have

seen you," writes a friend, "several hundred times in this somnambule state, during a period extending over three years. The peculiarities which distinguished it were most remarkable. Your eyelids, in this state, when you were particularly animated, would be tightly closed, and yet there would be a luminous expression on your countenance which could hardly have been equalled with the aid of your open eyes. Generally the eyelids would hang loose, and slightly open; and then it could be seen that the balls were always so rolled up that they could not be a medium of vision. During the months and years that I saw you almost daily in this state, I could never detect the waking expression on your face. Whatever might occur to startle or surprise, never by any accident were the eyes thrown open as they would have been when awake.

"It was remarked by all that your voice was much more soft and childlike than usual. Indeed, your whole manner would be changed, as if you had become once more as a little child. You would always allude to your waking self, or material body, in the third person, as *she*. For instance, you would say, '*She* isn't hungry;' never, by any inadvertence, '*I* am not hungry.' It was rather unpleasant to you to be confounded with your physical person. It was sometimes a little embarrassing to others to keep your identities distinct, and they would often confound the two in conversation. But the distinction would be never lost for a moment by yourself. To you, the existence of spiritual body, distinct from the natural, seemed a consciousness as vivid as that which assures us that we breathe and move. The words of St. Paul, 'There is a natural body, and

there is a spiritual body,' were to you something more than a figure of speech — they were a literal truth, not to be explained away or darkened by any ingenuity of commentators or dogmatism of theologians.

"Your household duties and accustomed functions would be discharged by you in the somnambulic state with perfect convenience, and with a promptitude quite exemplary. You would frequently take your meals in this state; and, if your magnetizer were present, you would manifest the phenomenon of sympathy of taste in a marked and satisfactory manner — telling whether he were taking salt or vinegar, pepper or mustard, &c., when he might be behind a screen. At night, before the lamps were lighted, you would have a decided advantage over all others in the room in your ability to read, write, or work, while the rest of us might not be able to see our hands before us. I have several specimens of your somnambulic handiwork, in the form of moss and flowers arranged most tastefully on paper, and the whole executed in my presence while it was totally dark. I have also letters which were penned by you in utter darkness; and, strange to say, the handwriting is greatly superior to your usual careless chirography, and would not be supposed to be from the same hand.

"Your conversation was more marked by fluency and confidence (especially on religious subjects) than in your ordinary state. But as I looked mainly to the palpable phenomena of your case, I took little note of your opinions. Still I was not insensible to the psychical phenomena continually presented. They were too numerous to recount in this rapid summary. 'The merest trifles,' says a philosopher of our day, 'are interesting that suggest to us *an action in man independ-*

*ent of his present organization.* Now, mesmerism teems with more than slight indications of this ; and we should treasure up such glimmerings of futurity — however faint, and however presented to us — as inestimable proofs that we possess a germ of being which God permits us to behold partially unfolded here, in order to confirm our faith as to its fuller development hereafter.' Most thoroughly do I acquiesce in this sentiment, and most cogently have my experiences in your case commended it to my acceptance.

"Frequently, after you had been wakened from a long magnetic trance, during which a variety of incidents may have occurred, and many topics may have been discussed, I have (with the consent of your magnetizer, and seconded by his will) brought up, one by one, by the silent agency of my will, to your waking consciousness, any incident or topic which might suggest itself. This I would do simply by touching your forehead with my forefinger, thinking the while intently on the image to be awakened in your mind. The response would be as perfect and accurate as that from the keys of a piano. For instance, out of a hundred various incidents, I would select that of a plate of strawberries having been offered to you, or that of a watch having been wound up ; and by a touch on your forehead the image would be instantaneously brought up, and you would exclaim, 'Strawberries !' or 'Watch !' as it might have been. I repeated this experiment so often with success, that finally, though so marvellous in itself, it grew to be, like other daily marvels, an occasion for no emotion of surprise.

"Not only was your philanthropy more catholic and active, but towards the brute creation, especially the

more despised; such as insects, spiders, snakes, &c., from which you would shrink affrighted in your waking state, you would manifest a strange and fearless tenderness. — You would take them up, if injured, in your hands, and remove them to a place of safety. Fond of flowers when awake, you were doubly so in this singular state. . You would manifest an intuitive faculty of detecting the seats of disease in persons; often pointing out the part affected, as if from sympathy.

“I cannot recall, in this hurried letter, half the interesting phenomena witnessed in your case — such as your insensibility to the pain of an incision or wound in a magnetized limb — your quick reception of a mental communication, without the medium of any sound or sign — your distinct prevision (at one time six months in advance) of crises of disease — your detection of the character of an individual by pressing the hand — your ability to choose, out of a heap of miscellaneous articles, the one magnetized — your many striking developments of faculties and modes of thought distinguishing you, in a marvellous manner, from your waking self.

“On one occasion, at a time when you had suffered from repeated hemorrhages at the lungs, and we all feared that you would not live through the winter, you were kept in the somnambulic state an entire fortnight without being once wakened. The reason for this was, that while somnambulic you were far more manageable and reliable in observing all necessary precautions; and that you also seemed less sensitive to the cold, and your violent attacks of coughing were much more under control. At the time you were thrown into the somnambulic state on this occasion, there had been a heavy

snow storm, and Broadway, in New York, on which thoroughfare your windows looked, was blocked up with snow. There was a rose bush in your room, having a little green bud upon it, upon which a faint speck of crimson had just appeared. Your last impressions, when you were thrown into somnambulism, were of the snow without and the rose bush within. A fortnight afterwards, your magnetizer, without preparing you for the change in surrounding objects, suddenly awaked you and led you to the window. Every flake of the immense accumulation of snow had disappeared. He then led you to the well-known rose bush. The little bud was in full, luxuriant bloom! I shall never forget the expression of bewilderment and consternation on your face as you looked upon changes that seemed to strike you as miraculous. The fortnight was, to your waking consciousness, but a moment! Such was your excessive agitation that your magnetizer was obliged to make the *passes* at once, and restore you to your somnambulist consciousness. He then gave you an 'ordination' to carry into your waking state so much recollection of your fortnight's experience as would prepare you fully for the changes around you.

"A year or two previously, and a week or two after you were first magnetized by Dr. C——g, which was while you were stopping at the Astor House, in New York, in the winter of 1842, the illness under which you were laboring assumed a more alarming aspect than it had yet worn, and, while somnambulist, you were charged by your magnetizer to investigate your physical condition. I was not present, but learned, the same day, that you had predicted a great crisis in your malady at a certain hour in the night, the week following.

To the inquiry, whether any medical relief could be given, you replied, 'No drugs — mesmerism may possibly bring her through.' You pronounced yourself uncertain as to the issue of the crisis, but gave great encouragement to Dr. C——g to believe that prompt and earnest mesmeric aid would avail in producing the required relief. On the night fixed, at Dr. C——g's request, I accompanied him to your parlor at the Astor House, and you were shortly afterwards mesmerized, and I was put in communication. Mr. Mowatt was present, and was also put in communication. While awake, you had not had the slightest anticipation of what was expected, and no one had intimated your mesmeric prediction.

"We engaged in conversation, and had some hope of drawing your mind from the anticipated attack. You were perfectly tranquil, and conversed freely on various subjects. But precisely at the hour you had prevised and predicted, an expression of the intensest pain came upon your face, and you fell back in the most violent convulsions. Dr. C——g bore you to the sofa; but, though a strong man, his strength was unequal to the task of controlling the horrible spasms, which quivered through all your limbs and disfigured your face. At one time, every fibre was knotted into a state of iron rigidity. Your writhings were fearful to witness. Dr. C——g pronounced the attack congestion of the brain. Your face was purple, your forehead throbbed violently, and your skin was of the highest fever heat. Dr. C——g used no other ministration than the mesmeric passes throughout the attack, which lasted, with hardly an instant's cessation, about an hour. At the end of that time there was a sudden relaxation of your limbs,



and they seemed to settle into a state of repose. Your countenance became pale, and we half feared your last earthly moment had come. But a smile of inexpressible sweetness broke forth, (and your closed eyes seemed to make it all the more luminous,) and you whispered, in the childlike tone which was peculiar to your somnambulic state, 'You have brought her through.' 'Thank God!' exclaimed Dr. C——g, bursting into tears, with uncontrollable emotion.

"After this crisis your health began slowly to improve, though your lungs were still very sensitive, and you were subjected to frequent spitting of blood and violent fits of coughing, which kept your friends continually in a state of suspense as to your recovery.

"Your exact knowledge of time in the somnambulic state was a remarkable trait. No chronometer could be more exact. It seemed as if all nature were your dial plate, and that you could at any moment read what its index denoted.

"I am inclined to believe it is only those *somnambules* who are naturally pliable and dependent who are under the entire control of their magnetizers. There was certainly no surrender of your will to *yours*. You were the dictator to him on all occasions as to what you should do. You prescribed your own medicines and diet; disputed, argued, and disagreed with him often; and were entirely independent of him, except so far as related to the keeping up of the magnetic influence by an occasional visit from him and a renewal (without touch) of the *passes*. He would leave you in the somnambulic state with Mr. Mowatt or your sister, and, perhaps, not see you again for twenty-four hours.

"Although, in this state, you were always cheerful,

and sometimes jocose, one of its most prominent developments was that of your religious faculties and sympathies. Frequently you would talk, like one inspired, of spiritual realities and the meaning of life. What in your waking state was *faith*, seemed to be *sight* in your somnambulic. It was no longer a speculation, or even a belief, that there was a life after death, but a *knowledge*, far more confident and assured than that which we usually entertain, on going to bed, that we shall wake in the morning.

“In crises of disease, when your physician did not believe you would live through the week, he would tell you, in your somnambulic state, his apprehensions, though it would have been dangerous to communicate them to you awake. The perfect equanimity, even cheerfulness, with which you would receive such announcements, was matter of surprise to all who witnessed it. In times of extreme emaciation, when you could be lifted like a child, and when all who looked on you and heard your paroxysms of coughing would turn away with the persuasion that you could not ‘last through the season,’ you had always, in your somnambulic state, some pleasantry with which to dispel the fears of the standers by. The truth was, that, though you regarded death as a welcome emancipation, you still knew, far better than the doctor, the physical state of the ‘simpleton,’ as you used to call your waking self, and relied upon mesmerism to bring her through.

“Your views of death, at the same time, in your somnambulic state, were always so serenely assured, and such was the quiet satisfaction with which you seemed to look forward on what John Sterling calls ‘the common road into the great darkness,’ that, the

nearer the prospect was brought, the more grateful it became ; or rather, to you there was no darkness, but it was all a rosy light, and to your mind

‘This King of Terrors was the Prince of Peace.’

“The separation of the waking from the somnambulic consciousness in your case was most complete and perfect. Never, by any accident, could I discover that you brought into your waking state the slightest recollection of what had occurred in your somnambulic ; and this during a period of three years. To the psychologist, as well as the physiologist, all the phenomena of your case were intensely interesting, as the many persons who had an opportunity of investigating them will admit.”

During my illness, the beloved home which I had made such efforts to save was sold. As soon as I was able to drive out, I begged to be allowed to visit it once again. It was spring, but a late spring. Not a tree had begun to bud. The gardens, which I had last seen in all the richness of their autumn bloom, were bare of leaf or flower, excepting a few crocuses that had pierced through the slowly-melting snow. The favorite arbor appeared more bleak and desolate even than the gardens. Brown and withered vine stems alone covered the trellis, where huge clusters of grapes had hung in purple luxuriance. Even the greenhouse had a deserted air. Many of the flowers had been removed, many more had died, and those that remained were suffering from neglect. We looked around for the heliotrope of hair-decking memory — it was gone. After wandering about the grounds until we were chilled in more senses than one, we took refuge in the house.

The unfurnished rooms had a cold, deserted aspect, but to me every nook and corner teemed with delightful associations. I could scarcely compel myself to believe that this house would nevermore be our home; that in this bright, cheerful chamber I should never again sleep; that there would be no more merry meetings in this large, old-fashioned ball room, which at Christmas time was ever decked with evergreens, and on summer festivities ever garlanded with flowers; that there would be no more plays in our little theatre, no more bands of music in the old hall. But so it was. Yet, when the *certainty* of what must be resigned came upon me, its pain had been abstracted. The loss was heavy, but could be reckoned; the gain since that loss no human reckoning could measure.

It was arranged that if my health were sufficiently restored I should resume my public readings in the autumn, making the tour of the United States for that purpose.

We passed the summer at Lennox, — one of the most picturesquely beautiful localities I ever visited, — a summer brightened by constant intercourse with the gifted Miss Sedgwick and her genial relatives. Mrs. Charles Sedgwick kept a seminary for young ladies. Amongst her scholars were a number of charming girls. We soon became acquainted, and they used to treat me as a companion, crowding my apartment at every recess, and bringing me fruits, and flowers, and other simple offerings of affection. I grew warmly attached to many of them, as I believe they were to me. They made me listen to their grievances, or join in their games, or read aloud for their amusement. Then came the usual schoolgirl interchange of locks of hair and

pressed flowers. I still preserve a goodly pile of curls, ringlets, and braids of various hues, that remind me of lovely Lennox schoolgirls, now wives and mothers.

Miss Sedgwick wrote them a play, and they pressed me into service as stage manager, costumer, and prompter. The rehearsals were particularly amusing. There were some tragic effects necessary, and my young pupils found the greatest diversion in learning how to stab themselves gracefully and die in attitude. I devoted a week to teaching them their parts, planning their costumes, and making tow wigs to represent the gray hairs of age or the powdered *toupées* of English footmen.

The play was performed before a numerous assemblage of Mrs. Sedgwick's friends. It was highly successful. The girls acted with great spirit, and even the tow wigs "made a hit." I was busily engaged behind the scenes during the performance, but joined the company in the drawing room at its conclusion. Feeling greatly fatigued, I was just planning how I could steal off unnoticed, when the door was thrown open with an emphasis that announced some important entrance. The scholars in procession walked in, the eldest bearing a wreath of white flowers. The crowd drew back, and the young girls approached their amateur manager. I could only stare at them in mute and embarrassed astonishment. The crownbearer made me a simple and feeling address, and placed the wreath upon my head—a very tired, aching head it chanced to be. This was a part of the performance which I had not anticipated. Of course, it was necessary to say something; but I fancy I made a rather stupid and awkward acknowledgment, for I was taken unawares, supposing

that the curtain had fallen upon my portion of the entertainment, and left me where I had passed the evening — happily *behind the scenes*.

The distinguished divine, Dr. William Ellery Channing, was an honored guest at this performance. He was warm in his expressions of delight, and many times rose from his seat, and clapped his hands, and laughed with genuine enjoyment. Some of the guests remarked, that, in watching him, they forgot to look at the play.

He said to me afterwards, "I was never in a theatre but once in my life, and that was when I was travelling in England. I saw Othello, but I was not half so much entertained as I have been to-night with the performance of these young girls."

Dr. Channing and his family resided in the same hotel with us. We spent many hours together, and I was never tired of listening to his eloquent discourse, and watching the brilliant play of his benign countenance. One day I was sitting on the piazza, reading aloud to Mr. Mowatt. The book was Swedenborg's *Divine Providence*. A slight movement behind my chair caused me to turn. Dr. Channing was leaning against the open door, apparently listening. He told me to go on, and I had no excuse for not obeying. I read for some time uninterruptedly. At length he accosted me with, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

I replied, "I think I do."

"Do you believe it?"

"Yes."

"What makes you believe it?"

"Because *I can't help it*."

"That's a *woman's* reason," he answered, laughing; "but I believe it is the strongest you could give."

He then told me that he had read a portion of Swedenborg's works with great attention, and he revered the author, although the doctrines had not, as yet, carried the same conviction to his mind as they had done to ours.

In the subject of mesmerism he took the deepest interest. On two occasions he persuaded me to allow myself to be placed under the influence, that he might satisfy himself on several doubtful points. One was of the possibility of mind communicating with mind without the medium of language or any material sign. His experiment, I believe, convinced him that this could be the case.

I recited, at his request, several of the selections which I had read in public. He now and then kindly pointed out defects in elocution or faulty pronunciations. And even now I can never utter one or two of the words in the pronunciation of which he corrected me without thinking of Dr. Channing. The day before we parted he came to my room and asked me to read to him once more. I did so, and he then proposed in return to read to me. He chose Bryant's exquisite poem of the Future Life. His silvery tones were tremulous as he read, and his mild eyes beamed with a lustre almost angelic. In his manner there was something so solemn and impressive that I listened with awe. In less than a month he himself entered that future life,

"The sphere that keeps  
The disembodied spirits of the dead."

He was standing on its threshold when he read to me. I might well hearken with suspended breath, in rapt and wondering reverence.

## CHAPTER X

*Contributions to Magazines.*—*The Fortune Hunter.*—*Miscellaneous Bookmaking.*—*Evelyn.*—*Amusing Proposition from an English Publisher.*—*Singular Mode of violating a Copyright.*—*Mary Howitt's Mention of the three Orphans.*—*Little Esther.*—*Death Bed of the Mother.*—*One's Neighbors.*—*Drive to Harlem.*—*Search for the Greys.*—*A blind Father.*—*Margaret.*—*Death of her Father and Mother.*—*Johnny and Willie.*

AUTUMN did not find me sufficiently reëstablished in health to resume my public readings, as was proposed. This was a heavy disappointment, but I was well enough for less fatiguing occupation. So little had been saved from the wreck of our fortune that there was strong need for exertion. I wrote a series of lively articles under the *nom de plume* of "Helen Berkley." They were published in various popular magazines, and I was well remunerated. These articles consisted of sketches of celebrated persons with whom I had been brought into communication, and humorous stories, generally founded on fact. The larger portion of them have since appeared in London magazines. Several were translated into German, and reprinted. Under my own name I at that time published nothing but verse.

I had half determined to attempt a tale of some length, and was pondering upon the subject, when a friend informed me that the New World newspaper had offered one hundred dollars for the best original novel in one volume. The title must be the *Fortune Hunter*



and the scene laid in New York. The novel must be completed in a month, or within six weeks at the latest.

“Why do you not try what you can do?” said my friend. “Write a story in your Mrs. Berkley style — you can easily make the title apply. Ten to one your novel will be the one accepted.”

Thus encouraged, I lost no time, and that very day made the sketch of a plot, which I submitted to my counsellor and friend. He approved, and I went to work diligently. At the time appointed, the book was completed. It was presented to the New World publishers, and the note for one hundred dollars sent me in return, was the most agreeable evidence of its acceptance. The *Fortune Hunter* had an extensive sale, and, after my identity with Mrs. Berkley became known, the publishers chose to affix my name to the work. The copyright being theirs, my consent was not even asked.

I was very much amused by an article that appeared in one of the papers accusing me of being an *imitator* of Mrs. Berkley, and more than hinting that the imitation fell far short of the original.

The *Fortune Hunter* has lately been translated into German.

I continued to write for various magazines — the *Columbian*, *Democratic Review*, *Ladies' Companion*, *Godey's*, *Graham's*, &c. I used fictitious names, and sometimes supplied the same number of a magazine with several articles, only one of which was supposed to be my own. I also prepared for the press a number of works, the copyrights of which were purchased by Messrs. Burgess & Stringer. They were principally compilations, with as much or as little original matter

as was found necessary — book cement, to make the odd fragments adhere together. The subjects of these books were not of my own choosing — I wrote to order, for profit, and to supply the demands of the public. In this manner were produced *Housekeeping made Easy*, (the name of Mrs. Ellis was not affixed by me,) *Book of the Toilette*, *Cookery for the Sick*, *Book of Embroidery*, *Knitting*, *Netting*, and *Crochet*, *Etiquette for Ladies*, *Ball-room Etiquette*, *Etiquette of Matrimony*, and similar publications, the very names of which I cannot now remember.

These books, especially the first, proved very profitable, so much so that Mr. Mowatt concluded he would derive greater benefit by publishing the works I compiled himself than by selling the copyright to other publishers. He accordingly established a firm, and his books were supplied chiefly by me. The success of the undertaking was of brief duration.

My time was wholly engrossed in bookmaking; but having now more freedom of choice as regarded the works I prepared, cookery books and books on etiquette were gladly abandoned. I found more congenial occupation in abridging a *Life of Goethe*, and another of *Madame D'Arblay*. The pleasure, however, was of a particularly private nature, for the books proved unsalable. Not a little disheartened by their failure, I returned to my labors in a less interesting but more lucrative field of literature.

I could not drudge always, — for this book compiling was unmitigated drudgery, — and during leisure moments I amused myself by writing *Evelyn*, a domestic tale, in two volumes. *Frederika Bremer's* works, translated by *Mary Howitt*, were my favorites amongst mod-

ern novels. The delight with which I perused them undoubtedly influenced the style in which Evelyn was written.

Evelyn herself was not an ideal creation. I could never write mere fiction; I needed a groundwork of reality. Her history was that of one whom I had dearly loved — over whose tomb there are few to weep, but whose sin we may dare to hope was forgiven, for “she loved much.”

When the book was completed, an English literary gentleman proposed that I should allow him to take the manuscript to London, and have it published there previous to its appearance in this country. I consented, and a few months afterwards received a notice from a London publisher that he would purchase the English copyright and produce the book, if I would write a *third* volume. He assured me that nobody purchased novels in two volumes — all the popular writers of the day extended their romances to three. As the second volume of Evelyn ends with the heroine's death, I did not see how I could with propriety bring her to life and prolong her miseries through another volume. The offer of the London publisher was politely declined. Evelyn was published, as originally written, by Carey & Hart, of Philadelphia. Owing to the delay occasioned in regaining possession of the manuscript, the work was not produced until I had made my *début* upon the stage. This event probably accounted for its rapid sale. The copyright fortunately remained in my own possession.

A rather singular violation of this copyright took place in Cincinnati. The book was abridged into one volume, and published, with a wretched frontispiece, as a sort of souvenir for young ladies. The word London

was to be found upon the titlepage; but the type, paper, and general getting up of the book betrayed this to be a mere *ruse de guerre*. This mangled edition appears also to have had a sale. Its existence was a source of much annoyance, but could not be prevented without the institution of legal proceedings. These were not taken.

Incidents of a different nature belong to this period.

Mary Howitt, in her memoir of me, makes affectionate mention of three orphan children, who were protected and educated by Mr. Mowatt and myself, as though the act were one of *premeditated* and intentional charity. This was not so. I should consider our first acquaintance and whole intercourse with the family of the Greys as merely *accidental*, could I believe that that word applied to any event of life. *Providential* it certainly was to them, and we were but unconscious instruments in the hands of a higher Power. The circumstances which led to our becoming interested in the children of the Greys were these. Returning from a drive one severely cold day in November, I noticed a little beggar girl, thinly clad, who was seated upon our doorsteps, sobbing violently. She cried like a child in real distress. I stopped to ask what ailed her, and could gain no answer but tears. As I was still an invalid, and dared not remain in the cold, I told the servant to make the little girl come into the parlor to talk with me. She was brought in with some difficulty, but gradually the warm fire thawed her half-frozen limbs, and perhaps her heart.

“Tell me what you are crying about!” had been repeated some twenty times, in all varieties of coaxing intonations, before I could gain a reply.

At last her tongue was unloosed, and she sobbed out, "Mother's very ill, and they say she is dying! Father's got no work, and sent me out for cold victuals; but I can't get nothing, and your cook turned me out of the kitchen."

Little Esther's grief was too genuine for me to doubt her story. I inquired where her mother lived. The distance was very short. I had not thrown aside my hat and cloak; it was easy to accompany her home. She took me to a dilapidated building, and we entered a small, close room. Upon a cot in one corner lay a young woman, whose ghastly features betokened acute suffering. A puny infant, about two or three weeks old, rested upon her arm. The little creature was moaning piteously, but seemed too feeble to cry. Instead of the plump ruddiness of first babyhood, its face was as pallid as that of the mother, and far more wrinkled.

The woman told me her history — it was one of utter destitution. She added, that she believed herself to be dying; but her chief anxiety was for her children. I promised to visit her occasionally, and to interest others in her behalf, and left, desiring her to send little Esther to see me the next morning.

Esther was a dark-eyed, bright little creature, and, I thought, affectionate. When she came in the morning, I sent her home to tell her mother that, if the latter chose, I would keep the child to run on errands and wait upon me, and that I would take as good care of her as I could. I had no particular use for her, but I loved the presence of childhood about the house. The mother returned her thanks and hearty consent. With the assistance of my sisters, Esther was soon furnished

with a suitable wardrobe, and her ragged, "cold-victual clothes" (as she used to call them) were exchanged for neat and comfortable attire. She seemed happy in her new home, and gave me little trouble. I accompanied her to see her mother at short intervals. For a month the poor woman gradually grew worse. One Sunday afternoon Esther rushed into the room greatly agitated, and said, "Come quickly to my mother—she is dying!"

I went. The room was filled with the Roman Catholic friends of the dying woman, who were performing the last ordinances of their religion. They drew back, and allowed me to approach the bed with the child. The mother tried to speak, but could not. She feebly lifted her hand, looked in my face, and smiled as the dying only can smile. A few moments afterwards she expired.

Esther, for some days, was almost inconsolable for the loss of her mother, and was often at home, taking care of her baby sister. I wish I were not compelled to allude to the father, one of the coarsest specimens of an Irishman that could well be found. In less than a week after his wife's funeral he called upon Mr. Mowatt, and demanded wages for his daughter—a child not yet ten years of age. Mr. Mowatt explained to him that she was only allowed to remain in the house to please me; that she was too young to be of any service; and that all indebtedness was on the side of the parent. The man rudely replied, that, if he couldn't get pay for her, she should be taken home immediately. He knew that I was attached to the child, and supposed that we would yield to his demands rather than part with her. His threat was put in execution, and the weeping little girl was taken back to her former wretched home.

It is proverbial that one's neighbors have an accurate knowledge of one's domestic affairs. Our neighbors had remarked the transformation of the little "cold-victual girl" into a neatly-dressed, merry-looking attendant. They had become acquainted with the history of the mother and the ungracious conduct of the father. His ingratitude was a theme constantly discussed. I was, of course, duly pitied for having had any thing to do with such a man; and the little I had accomplished for the child was greatly exaggerated, and lauded about ten times as much as it deserved to be.

The remark of a seamstress, who was sewing for our opposite neighbors, was repeated to a domestic of mine. "If Mrs. Mowatt is fond of children, and cares any thing about poor people," said the seamstress, "I wish somebody would tell her of the Greys, an English family, who are living in Harlem. They are people that have seen better days; but the father is blind. There are several children, — one of them a sweet little girl, a much finer child than that Esther, — and they are actually starving."

This speech was communicated to me. It did not make any particular impression at the time; but the next day the words kept coming into my head again and again, and I could not help wondering whether the Greys really were starving — whether any thing could be done for them — whether I should not like the little girl in Esther's place, &c., &c. Very soon I could think of nothing else — the Greys were always in my mind. I could not sleep without dreaming of them, or wake without longing to know something of their history. I could not interest myself in my usual occupa-

tions. I was thoroughly idle, restless, and uncomfortable.

Two days passed thus, and on the third I came to the conclusion that I would drive to Harlem. I was seldom allowed to venture out at all in very cold weather. This was a much longer drive than I was considered able to take; therefore I said nothing of my determination to Mr. Mowatt. I knew he would object on the plea of my health. As soon as I was left alone, I despatched a message to our opposite neighbor, requesting that she would send me the address of the Greys. The answer returned was that the seamstress who had spoken of them had gone home. She had said that they lived somewhere in Harlem, and that a Mr. G——n, who kept a hotel there, knew all about them, and could answer for their respectability. She knew nothing of the people herself.

This was information scanty enough, but in my restless and excited state of mind it sufficed. I sent for a carriage, and told the coachman to drive to Harlem, and stop at the first hotel. The carriage stopped after what seemed to my impatience a very long drive. "Is Mr. G——n the proprietor of this hotel?" was the inquiry made to the waiter, who, with an air of great *empressement*, opened the carriage door.

"No, ma'am."

"Do you know what hotel in Harlem he keeps?"

The answer was also in the negative. We drove to another hotel, and still another, but at both the existence of any Mr. G——n was ignored. At a fourth the proprietor himself chanced to be standing on the piazza. In answer to the usual question, he somewhat pompously proclaimed his own proprietorship, and offered to hand me out of the carriage.



"I wish you could tell me what hotel Mr. G——n keeps ; I am very anxious to find it out," I said to him in a somewhat appealing manner, for I was beginning to get discouraged.

"I know all the hotels hereabouts, and there's no Mr. G——n keeps any of them. You'll find mine as good as the best of them, ma'am."

"It is Mr. G——n himself I want. Do you know any person in Harlem of that name?"

"There's an individual that keeps a place where they *sell spirits*, and his name is G——n ; but I don't suppose that's what the lady wants," replied the man, with so decidedly insolent an expression that it took some courage to address him again.

"Be so good as to give my coachman the direction," I managed to reply. I was becoming tremblingly alive to the folly of my expedition.

After a rude stare, and an evident inclination to indulge me with some further remarks, — probably upon the eccentricity of my tastes and conduct, — the man obeyed.

We drove to "the place where spirits were sold." Mr. G——n lived there, but was not at home. I sent for Mrs. G——n. She also was out. The message was brought by a little girl about eight or nine years old.

"Is there not any body in the house to whom I can speak?" I inquired of her.

"Only me — every body is out."

"Does your father know the Greys, an English family, who live somewhere in Harlem?"

"Is it the blind Mr. Grey?"

"Yes, I believe he's blind."

“O, we know him, and Mrs. Grey, and the children.”

“Are they poor?”

The little girl laughed, as though she already understood the distinction between rich and poor, and replied, “Well, I guess they be!”

I asked her to tell the coachman where they lived. I never expected him to find the place when I heard her puzzling direction of, “After you turn the corner, you go to the right — then down to the left — then take the first street,” &c., &c., but he did find it without much difficulty. The house — or *shanty*, as it might more properly be called — stood back some distance from the road. The snow lay on the ground at least a foot deep. There was no pathway through it to the door. The coachman, who was accustomed to drive me, begged that I would sit still until he had trampled it down to form a narrow path. I then alighted, and he remained with his horses. No answer came to my repeated knockings at the street door. I opened it, and went in. I knocked at the first door within — no answer. I opened it — the room was empty both of furniture and inhabitants. I tried room after room, but with the same result.

While I was still searching, a large dog started from some unnoticed corner and leaped upon me, as though to be caressed. This was the first sign of life that I beheld. I made friends with the dog, as the best means of self-defence. After playing about me in a manner which seemed a dumb welcome, he ran to a sort of outer building, — so I think it was, — and I followed. Here he scratched at the door, and I thought it advisable to knock.

“Come in,” said the voice of a man.

I entered a room where poverty had undisputed reign. The floor was bare — scarcely an article of furniture was to be seen. In the centre of the room stood a small stove; but the fire had quite died out, though it was a piercingly cold day. In front of the stove lay a little boy, half naked, and shivering with the cold. Upon a small wooden box sat a baby, strapped by its waist to the back of a chair. Beside them, so close to the stove that his clothes must have burned had there been any fire within, sat their father.

“Can you tell me if Mr. Grey lives here?” I asked, on entering.

The man rose with a kind of dignity that I did not look for in so rude a place, and bowing, answered, “My name is Grey.”

He advanced to find me a chair, but with uncertain steps, and one hand extended as though feeling his way. By his movement only could one have divined that he was blind. His eyes were large, of a clear, light blue, and did not seem to me wholly expressionless. He was tall, well made, and handsome, in spite of the traces of suffering upon his countenance. I could not but notice the courtesy of his manner as he bowed on offering me the seat. I entered into conversation with him — his language was not that of an uneducated man. I drew from him his history, though he was evidently inclined to be reserved. He had been cheated by his partner while conducting a prosperous business, either in England or Ireland, I forget which. The partner had absconded, and Mr. Grey, totally ruined, had brought his family to America, in the hope of almost “digging gold in the streets.” Shortly after his arrival in New York, his eyes began to trouble him, and he soon became so

blind that he could barely distinguish light from darkness. His wife had tried to get work; sometimes she obtained a little sewing, sometimes a little washing, but often she could get no employment at all. They had no friend but Mr. G——n, who had known them “in the old country.” He had been very kind, but he had a family of his own. Had he not helped them, they must have starved. I inquired for Mr. Grey’s wife. She was out, and his little daughter Margaret was also absent. He hoped they would “bring back something to make the *fire burn* — this winter weather was so hard upon the little boys.” I looked upon the baby faces turned wonderingly to mine — they were blue with cold.

I could not ask whether his wife was gathering chips for the fire, or whether she was endeavoring to obtain money to purchase fuel; there was something about the bearing of the man that would have made any one guarded in running the risk of wounding his feelings. I told him that, if I liked his little girl, I might take her to live with me; then gave him my address, and expressed a desire that his wife would call the next day with the child.

I returned home just in time to prevent alarm at my long absence. Had the result of the expedition been different, I should have regarded it as Quixotic — Dorcasina-ish in the extreme.

The next morning brought Mrs. Grey and her little daughter. The former did not impress me so favorably as her husband, but the sweet face of the child, with its large, blue, frightened eyes, won spontaneous interest. She was nine years old, but small for her age, and thin almost to emaciation. Her fair hair fell in disordered masses to her waist. Her features were pinched and

sharp, and she had that look of quiet suffering which it is so painful to behold in the countenance of childhood.

The mother joyfully consented to leave little Margaret with me. It was arranged that the family should remove from Harlem to New York to more comfortable apartments. The influence of my friends could readily procure for her work or needful assistance.

The mother departed, and the little girl, with her piteous expression of face, stood trembling at my knee. She seemed almost heart-broken when her mother kissed her for good by, but she dared not cry — ill usage had so thoroughly crushed her spirit that it seemed to have deprived her of the childish relief of tears. Of that brutal usage we had ample proof when her tattered garments were removed. Her fragile person was literally covered with blue and yellow bruises — the consequence of severe blows. These had not been received from her parents, — so she told me, — but from one to whom poverty had forced them to intrust her. Though it was December, her garments were but three in number, and of summer-suited materials.

Busy fingers plied their needles that day — some of them more used to the pen than the needle, but retaining a feminine affection for the latter. A little girl sat by the fire that evening, bending towards the genial heat as though she were making a new acquaintance. In her neat blue dress and white bib, with her fair hair smoothed and cut, it was only in the painful expression of her face that the little Margaret of the morning could be recognized. Her countenance still wore a look of strange apprehension. It was months before it lost that mournful expression — many months before I ever saw her smile. The first time I heard her sing, I had noise-

lessly entered the room where she was at work. Her voice gushed out rich and clear as the song of a bird. She gave a start of terror when she saw me, and, on my bidding her sing on, burst into tears. The child of nine years old was already a sceptic to the existence of kindness.

But I must shorten my narrative of the Greys. Little Margaret remained with us, beloved and learning to love. Her parents and infant brothers removed to New York. Medical aid failed to restore the father's sight. The mother worked incessantly to support her little family, but had a bitter struggle with poverty. In less than a year from the day when I wandered through the empty house at Harlem, and was guided by a dog to the back building where the blind man sat, all that was mortal of him was lying in a coffin. In four weeks more another coffin entered the room from which his mortal remains had been removed, and Margaret and her brothers were weeping over the corpse of their mother.

They had two elder sisters, but neither in circumstances to provide for the little orphans. The elder boy, John, a gentle, delicate little fellow of about six years old, was evidently ill. His disease was the same that his mother's had been — inflammation of the lungs. That he should be instantly cared for was imperative; and we took him home to nurse. One of the neighbors to the Greys took charge of little Willie. The elder boy was ill for nearly two months, but so patient and docile that he gave but little trouble. He sometimes had to be left alone for hours; but we always found him either singing merrily, or with his toys and picture books laid on the bed beside him, and always happy.

When the pale, feeble little fellow began to wander about the house, he was in nobody's way, but even tried to make himself useful, and share his sister's light duties.

I used to send Margaret on a weekly visit of inquiry after the youngest child. One day she returned, sobbing so loudly that I heard her before she entered the room where I was sitting. "My little brother! little Willie! poor little Willie!" was all that she could say.

At first I thought the child was dead, and reproached myself for having bestowed so little care upon him. As soon as Margaret could speak, she told me that he had been ill with the measles, and was just recovering; but the people where he was staying said they could be burdened with him no longer. They had arranged to send him that very day to the Orphan Asylum.

The weeping child ended her tale with "Don't let him go! let me bring him here! Only let me bring him here for a little while!"

Her grief was so persuasive that I could not resist her entreaties. An hour after, she came into the room again, staggering under the weight of the little boy in her arms—but this time her face was covered with smiles.

Willie was about two years old, an apple dumpling-shaped, rosy-cheeked little boy, who could just toddle about and prattle in an unintelligible language. I had no intention of keeping him—no fixed intention towards the children at all. They were quiet, manageable, and winning. Mr. Mowatt took a ready interest in them. They grew into his affections as rapidly as into mine. They were my pupils; and if they added

much to my cares, they contributed as largely to my joys. Little by little they became an acknowledged part of our small household. At first we anticipated finding some person or persons who would like to adopt the two boys. No such party sprang up, and the idea was tacitly abandoned — or rather, it was gradually forgotten.

When new reverses caused me to enter a profession, the children found protection for a short period in the homes of my sisters. Mr. Mowatt went through the necessary forms, and became their legal guardian. Before we sailed for Europe, a highly respectable family in Connecticut, the state of steady habits, received the two boys as boarders, and treated them as tenderly as though they had been their own children. The lads attended day school regularly, and prospered in all ways. They have remained at Greenfield Hill until this period, and are now a couple of fine, frank, truehearted boys, who have repaid by their gratitude and good conduct all the care and love that have been bestowed upon them.

Three miles distant from the residence of the boys, little Margaret was placed at school with a family equally excellent, equally kind, with that to which we intrusted her brothers. When I returned from England, four years afterwards, — returned alone, — I could scarcely believe that the tall, graceful girl who threw herself into my arms, weeping with joy, was the tiny Margaret I had left. I could not help seeing, in thought, the bruised, emaciated child, who, shivering with cold and fear, stood before me on that memorable December morning. I felt that she was Heaven-intrusted to my care. If her maturer womanhood fulfil the promise of her girlhood, I have nothing more to ask.



I must not close the history of these children without relating a rather singular circumstance in connection with them. Until quite recently, I knew nothing of their parentage but what I have related above. The Rev. Mr. A——e, visiting Greenfield, where the boys are living, noticed the children, and inquired who they were. To his surprise, he found that their parents had belonged to the parish in Harlem of which he was pastor. He had baptized little Willie. He had been informed by the Mr. G——n, after whom I had made such a singular search, that they were of good family, had wealthy bachelor uncles, with other particulars that may at some future day be advantageous to the children, but which I have taken no pains as yet to authenticate.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Fashion. — Original of Adam Truceman. — Fashion accepted by the Park Theatre. — Interview with Mr. Barry. — Witnessing a first Rehearsal unseen. — First Night of Fashion. — Success. — Second Rehearsal. — Author's Benefit. — Fashion produced at Philadelphia. — Invitations from Managers of Walnut Street Theatre. — Their Liberality and Courtesy. — Witnessing Performance in Philadelphia. — Demand for the Author. — Failure of Mr. Mowatt. — Proposition that I should adopt the Stage. — A Change of Views. — Reflections. — Mary Howitt on the Members of the Profession. — A Determination. — My Father's Consent. — Contract with Mr. C——. — Useless Remonstrances.*

“WHY do you not write a play?” said E. S—— to me one morning. “You have more decided talent for the stage than for any thing else. If we can get it accepted by the Park Theatre, and if it should succeed, you have a new and wide field of exertion opened to you — one in which success is very rare, but for which your turn of mind has particularly fitted you.”

“What shall I attempt, comedy or tragedy?”

“Comedy, decidedly; because you can only write what you feel, and you are ‘nothing if not critical’ — besides, you will have a fresh channel for the sarcastic ebullitions with which you so constantly indulge us.”

It was true that at that period of my life a vein of sarcasm, developed by the trials through which I had passed, pervaded all my thoughts, and betrayed itself in much that I wrote as well as in conversation. E. S——’s suggestion appeared to me good, and I com-

menced Fashion. If it is a satire on American *parvenuism*, it was intended to be a good-humored one. No charge can be more untrue than that with which I have been taxed through the press and in private—the accusation of having held up to ridicule well-known personages. The character of Mrs. Tiffany was *not* drawn from any one individual, but was intended as the type of a certain class. The only character in the play which was sketched from life was that of the blunt, warmhearted old farmer. I was told that the original was seen in the pit vociferously applauding Adam True-man's strictures on fashionable society. It was not very wonderful that his sentiments found an echo in my friend's bosom. I longed to ask the latter whether he recognized his own portrait; but we have never met since the likeness was taken.

There were no attempts in Fashion at fine writing. I designed the play wholly as an *acting* comedy. A *dramatic*, not a literary, success was what I desired to achieve. Caution suggested my not aiming at both at once.

Fashion was offered to the Park Theatre. In the usual course of events, its fate would have been to gather dust amongst an ever-increasing pile of manuscripts on Mr. Simpson's table—heaps of rejected plays, heaps of plays, the merits of which were never even investigated. It generally takes several months to induce a manager to read a new play—several months more before he consents to its production. Making an exception to prove this rule, Mr. Simpson read Fashion at once. He liked it, and handed the manuscript to his stage manager, Mr. Barry, who also approved it, and pronounced that the play would make a hit.

A few days more, and I received official information that *Fashion* was accepted by the Park Theatre — that it would be produced without delay, and in a style of great magnificence — also, that I would receive an author's benefit on the third night, and a certain per centage of the nightly receipts of the theatre for every performance of the play after it had run a stipulated number of nights.

On listening to this intelligence, I very quietly asked myself whether I was awake. It took some time, and needed some practical experiments upon my own sensibilities, before I could feel assured that I was not enjoying a pleasant dream. I was almost too much surprised to be elated.

It was necessary that I should call on Mr. Barry, to hear his suggestions concerning the casting of the play and certain slight alterations. I did so, and listened with seeming attention to his laying down of dramatic law ; but I was in a state of agreeable bewilderment through the whole interview. When I rose to leave, and received his very patronizing congratulations on having written a "remarkable play," I could not help fancying that he was saying to himself, "What a silly little soul it is !" Indeed, I half expected that he was going to pat me on the head and commend me for my "smartness." The impression I left upon his mind was certainly not that I was a very formidable or a very brilliant character.

The play was at once announced and put in rehearsal. The day before its representation I became anxious to witness one of these rehearsals, that I might form some idea of the chances of success. It is an author's privilege to attend the rehearsals of his own production, his

acknowledged seat being at the manager's table, upon the stage. He is also at liberty to make suggestions to the actors explanatory of his ideas — though, as a general rule, he finds they understand what he intended much better than he does himself; at least, they politely assure him that such is the case. Of these customs, I was too uncertain of success to avail myself. I preferred to overlook the mysterious doings from a private box, unseen by the actors.

Rehearsal was just commencing, when Mr. Mowatt and myself were introduced by Mr. Blake (for many years boxkeeper of the Park Theatre) into the theatre. The whole front of the building was so dark that we had to feel our way, stumbling over benches and chairs, until we succeeded in gaining our seats.

The stage was lighted by a single branch of gas, shooting up to the height of several feet in the centre of the footlights. It sent forth a dim, blue, spectral light, that gave a phantom-like appearance to surrounding objects. On the right of the stage was the prompter's table — on the left, the manager's table. Beneath the ghastly light sat a palefaced prompter, with the manuscript of *Fashion* in his hand. At his side stood the "call boy," a child of about ten years of age. He held a long strip of paper, somewhat resembling the tailors' bills of young spendthrifts, as they are represented on the stage. This was the "call" for the actors, and directed him which to summon from the greenroom.

The rehearsal of *Fashion* had begun. It was singular to see these kings and queens of the stage, whom I had been accustomed to behold decked in gold-embroidered robes and jewelled crowns, glittering in the full blaze of the footlights — now moving about in

this "visible darkness," some of the men in "shocking bad hats" and rough overcoats, and the ladies in modern bonnets in place of tiaras or wreaths of flowers, and mantles and warm cloaks instead of peasant petticoats or brocade trains. I found it difficult to recognize the romantic heroes and injured heroines in whose sufferings I had so often sympathized.

Every actor held his part, to which he constantly referred. It gave me an odd sensation to hear my own language uttered in all varieties of tones, and often conveying a meaning of which I did not suppose it to be susceptible. But I soon discovered that a rehearsal was a very serious affair. There was no laughing, except now and then at the situations of the play, — at which, by the by, I was particularly flattered, — no talking, except in reference to the business of the scene, and now and then a remark from some critical malcontent, which was never intended for the author's ears. There are two dances in the fourth act of *Fashion*, and these were gone through with a business-like gravity that was alarming. While witnessing this solemn rehearsal, I began to fancy I had made a mistake, and unconsciously written a tragedy. Rehearsal lasted several hours. At its close, when we stumbled through the dark passage into the box office, and stood once more in the light of day, it seemed to me again as though I had been dreaming. But the dream was a very sober one, and while it lasted I received a lesson upon the "vanity of human wishes." Of the probable success of the play I could not form the faintest idea.

The next night *Fashion* was produced. With an anxious heart I took my seat in the same private box from which I had overlooked the gloomy rehearsal on

the day previous. What a different aspect every thing wore ! The theatre flooded with light, the gay decorations, the finely-painted drop curtain, the boxes filled with beautiful women, the dense crowd in the pit and galleries, the inspiring music, — all seemed the effect of some Scottish *glamour* rather than a reality.

The music ceased. The gentleman who was to personate the *Count* in the comedy appeared before the curtain and delivered a prologue, written by Epes Sargent. It was a capital prologue — one calculated to put an audience in good humor ; and thus it took the first gigantic step towards insuring the success of the play. I subjoin it, though much of its effect necessarily depends on an appropriate delivery and stage action : —

## PROLOGUE.

(Enter a Gentleman, reading a Newspaper.)

“ ‘ *Fashion, a Comedy.* ’ I’ll go ; but stay —  
Now I read farther, ’tis a native play !  
Bah ! homemade calicoes are well enough,  
But homemade dramas *must* be stupid stuff.  
Had it the *London* stamp, ’twould do — but then,  
For plays, we lack the manners and the men ! ”

Thus speaks one critic. Hear another’s creed : —

“ ‘ *Fashion !* ’ What’s here ? (Reads.) It never can succeed !  
What ! from a woman’s pen ? It takes a man  
To write a comedy — no woman can.”

Well, sir, and what say you, and why that frown ?

His eyes uprolled, he lays the paper down : —

“ Here ! take,” he says, “ the unclean thing away !

’Tis tainted with the notice of a play ! ”

But, sir ! — but, gentlemen ! — you, sir, who think

No comedy can flow from native ink, —

Are we such *perfect* monsters, or such *dull*,

That Wit no traits for ridicule can cull ?

Have we no follies here to be redressed ?

No vices gibbeted ? no crimes confessed ?

"But then a female hand can't lay the lash on!"  
 How know you that, sir, when the theme is FASHION?  
 And now, come forth, thou man of sanctity!  
 How shall I venture a reply to thee?  
 The Stage — what is it, though beneath thy ban,  
 But a daguerreotype of life and man?  
 Arraign poor human nature, if you will,  
 But let the DRAMA have her mission still;  
 Let her, with honest purpose, still reflect  
 The faults which keeneyed Satire may detect.  
 For there *be* men who fear not an hercafter,  
 Yet tremble at the hell of public laughter!  
 Friends, from these scoffers we appeal to you!  
 Condemn the false, but O, applaud the true.  
 Grant that *some* wit may grow on native soil,  
 And Art's fair fabric rise from woman's toil.  
 While we exhibit but to *reprehend*  
 The social vices, 'tis for *you* to mend!

The audience applauded, as was expected of them, the prologue ended, and the curtain rose.

The cast of the play was exceedingly strong — so admirable that when, upon the falling of the curtain after the fifth act, an unequivocally brilliant success had been achieved, I was forced to admit that my laurels were not of my own earning. It would have been difficult for a play to fail with such acting as Chippendale's, in his striking delineation of Adam Trueman, Mrs. Knight's, in her irresistibly comic personation of Prudence, Fisher's as Snobson, Crisp's as the Count, Mr. Barry's as Mr. Tiffany, Dyott's as Colonel Howard, De Walden's as Mr. Twinkle, J. Howard's as Fogg, Skerrett's as Zeke, Miss Ellis's as Gertrude, Mrs. Barry's as Mrs. Tiffany, Miss Horn's as Seraphina, Mrs. Dyott's as Millinette.

The play was announced for repetition every night, and the audience loudly testified their approbation.



*after 1st perf.*

The day after the performance of a new drama, it is customary to call a rehearsal, for the sake of "cutting" the play, if too long, (and almost all plays *are* too long as originally written,) and to make other necessary alterations. To this rehearsal I was formally invited by the managers. Accompanied by Mr. Mowatt, I gladly attended. On that day, for the first time, I crossed the stage of a theatre. I was conducted to a seat at the manager's table.

The theatre had undergone its transformation again. All was darkness and silence. The solitary gas-branch burned as blue and ghastly as ever, and the actors, in their every-day dresses, moved mysteriously about in its shadowy light. But on nearer view they looked like weary and care-laden human beings, instead of phantoms.

Again the rehearsal of *Fashion* commenced. Mr. Barry arranged the "cuts," requesting my approval in a manner which left me very little alternative. The principal actors were presented to me, and I made as many delicate hints concerning certain misinterpretations of the text as I dared venture upon. It was very evident that they singly and collectively entertained the opinion that an author never knew the true meaning of his own words. His suppositions to the contrary were mere hallucinations.

*Fashion* was repeated again that night. The next was the one appointed for my benefit. On the occasion, the house was literally crammed from pit to dome. Owing to the judicious cutting, the performance was more rapid than on the first night, and went off with even greater spirit. At the falling of the curtain, there was a call for the author. This I had anticipated, and

instead of bowing from a private box, according to the established usage, I sent Mr. Barry a few lines expressive of my thanks, and desired him to deliver them before the curtain. "Mr. Barry then came forward," (said one of the newspapers, the next morning,) "and spoke as follows : " —

" LADIES AND GENTLEMEN : I am commissioned by Mrs. Mowatt to offer to you her sincere and most grateful acknowledgments for the favor with which you have received this comedy. She desires me to express the hope that you will take it rather as an earnest of what she may hereafter do than as a fair specimen of what American dramatic literature ought to be. (*Loud applause.*) With your permission, ladies and gentlemen, I will announce the comedy of Fashion every night until further notice." (*Loud and continued applause.*)

The audience were satisfied, and I was spared the necessity of making probably an awkward acknowledgment in person.

On the night of this benefit I sent to each of the ladies engaged in the play a trifling remembrance of the occasion. A note, acknowledging my indebtedness to the whole company for their admirable personations, was addressed to Mr. Barry. This was framed and hung by him in the greenroom.

Fashion was played nightly to full houses for three weeks, and only withdrawn to make room for "stars" who were engaged before its production.

During the run of the play in New York, it was produced in Philadelphia, at the Walnut Street Theatre, under the management of E. A. Marshall, Esq., the stage manager being W. Rufus Blake, Esq. Its success was as brilliant as in New York. The managers sent a pressing invitation to Mr. Mowatt and myself to visit Philadelphia and witness the representation. We

accepted, and were entertained by them for three days, at one of the first hotels, in the most courteous manner. Our suite of apartments were the best that could be procured — our table was sumptuously provided, and a carriage stood always at the door, at our disposal. The conduct of these gentlemen deserves particular mention, for there are few managers who would feel called upon to testify their indebtedness to an author in a style so generous and complimentary. A play may enrich a theatre, yet, as a general rule, the manager ignores the existence of the author, except so far as his contract is concerned.

The representation of *Fashion*, in Philadelphia, afforded us unqualified pleasure. It was difficult, or rather impossible, to decide whether the play was produced with greater *éclat* and more magnificent stage appointments at the Walnut or at the Park Theatre. The cast, too, was equally strong at both theatres. W. Rufus Blake, one of the most gifted of the pathetic and comic "old men" of the stage, enacted Adam True-man. Mrs. Thayer was drollness personified in Prudence. Wheatly as the Count, Fredericks as Mr. Tiffany, Chapman as Snobson, Young as Zeke, Mrs. Jones as Mrs. Tiffany, Miss Alexina Fisher as Gertrude, Miss Susan Cushman as Seraphina, and Mrs. Blake as Milinette, could not be surpassed even by their contemporaries of the Park.

We were accompanied to the theatre by Mr. and Mrs. Mason — the charming Emma Wheatly of Park Theatre memory. Our box was furnished with white satin bills, printed in letters of gold. At the close of the play the actors were all called before the curtain. Then rose shouts for the author. The audience had

become aware that she was in the theatre. If I had reflected on the subject, I should have expected this summons; as it was, I chanced to be wholly unprepared, and the unlooked-for demonstration affected me unpleasantly. Our party were seated in the first tier, and exposed to the full gaze of the audience, who now turned themselves *en masse* towards us. The shouts continued, and Mr. Mowatt and Mr. Mason entreated me to rise and courtesy. I could not muster courage, and felt much more inclined to make a cowardly escape. The audience grew more vociferous at the delay.

"There is no use of refusing; you will be obliged to rise," whispered Mrs. Mason.

I saw she was right, and answered, "I will, if you rise also and courtesy with me."

She objected at first, but finding that I would not move, and that the shouts were only redoubled, she amiably consented. We rose together, and were greeted with prolonged cheering. I courtesied several times, but was not sufficiently self-possessed to notice whether she did the same. This ceremony over, we took our departure as rapidly as possible. I little thought that, in less than two months, I should courtesy to an audience from the stage of that very theatre.

At the door of the theatre we were met by the managers, who requested that I would allow them to conduct me behind the scenes, and present the members of the company. This was another unexpected trial of my nerves, for I had not overcome a certain feeling of awe towards stage heroes and heroines, but I could not with any degree of graciousness refuse. We passed through a private entrance leading from the boxes. The green curtain was down—the stage represented a drawing

room in the house of Mr. Tiffany—the actors were ranged in a semicircle, awaiting us. They were presented in turn, and I exchanged, or tried to exchange, a few words with each of the ladies; but I fancy that my remarks were not particularly sensible, or much to the purpose. The impromptu introduction, and the novelty of my situation, had confused my ideas, and it is very probable that I commented on the excessive heat when every one stood shivering around me.

The next day, however, I hope the remembrance of my awkwardness and embarrassment was effaced from the minds of the ladies in question, for I sent them each a gold pencil in token of my appreciation of their efforts.

“Do you not feel proud?” inquired a friend of me.

I answered with perfect sincerity, “Perhaps I should, if the acting of *Fashion* had not been so very excellent that the author has only a secondary share of the general success.”

The secret of that success was, that *Fashion* is, strictly speaking, an “acting play,” and, placed in the hands of an accomplished company, the characters were re-created. An amount of interest was thus kept alive which so simple a plot could not legitimately awaken.

Edgar A. Poe, one of my sternest critics, wrote of *Fashion*, that it resembled the *School for Scandal* in the same degree that the *shell* of a locust resembles the living locust. If his severity was but *justice*, it must be that the spirits of the performers infused themselves into the empty shell, and produced a very effective counterfeit of *life*.

After three most delightful days we bade adieu to our manager hosts, and returned to New York.

The publishing business, in which Mr. Mowatt was engaged, had for some time been unsuccessful. Just at this period he failed, and became involved in greater difficulties than ever.

The success of *Fashion* had attracted the attention of managers. Again I received propositions to go upon the stage, coupled with the assurance that I would rapidly acquire an independence. The day had come when all things seemed to work together to force me of necessity to contemplate this step.

My health was still variable, and I had not yet wholly recovered from the effects of long illness. I had always intended to resume public readings when I grew sufficiently strong. Nearly double the amount of physique was needed for a night's reading than was required for the performance of a light part in a five-act drama.

✓ My views concerning the stage, and my estimate of the members of dramatic companies, had undergone a total revolution. Many circumstances had proved to me how unfounded were the prejudices of the world against the profession as a body. The communication into which I had been brought, by the production of *Fashion*, with the managers and members of the Park company and the managers of the Walnut Street Theatre, added to all I heard of their private histories, convinced me that I had formed unjust conclusions. Rather, I had adopted the conclusions of those who were as ignorant on the subject as myself—who, perhaps, cared as little as I had done to ascertain the truth.

My after experiences taught me that truer words concerning the stage were never written than those of Mary Howitt which preface her memoir of me. Re-

ferring to the members of the profession with whom she has become acquainted, she says, —

“Our readers need not be told that we consider the stage as capable of becoming one of the great means of human advancement and improvement, and for this reason it is that we especially rejoice to see amongst its ornaments men and women not only of surpassing talent and genius, but, which is far higher and much rarer, of high moral character and even deep religious feeling. Let not the so called religious world start at this assertion; we know what we say, and we fearlessly assert that there is many a poor, despised player, whose Christian graces of faith, patience, charity, and self-denial put to shame the vaunted virtues of the proud pharisee; nor are they always the purest who talk most about purity.

“Welcome, then, and doubly welcome, be all such reformers as come amongst us not only with the high argument of their own pure and blameless lives, but who, having passed through suffering and trial, know experimentally how to teach, and who teach, through the persuasive power of genius, and the benign influence of a noble womanly spirit.”

These lines had not then been written, but they apply to many a woman, whom I have known, who bears the too often contemptuously uttered name of “actress;” women who, with hearts full of anguish, nightly practise forgetfulness of self, and of their private sorrows, to earn their bread by delighting a public who misjudges them.

I pondered long and seriously upon the consequences of my entering the profession. The “*qu'en dira t'on ?*” of Society had no longer the power to awe me.

Was it right? was it wrong? were questions of higher moment. My respect for the opinions of "Mrs. Grundy" had slowly melted away since I discovered that, with that respectable representative of the world in general, *success* sanctified all things; nothing was reprehensible but *failure*.

I should never have adopted the stage as a matter of *expediency* alone, however great the temptation. What I did was not done lightly and irresponsibly. I reviewed my whole past life, and saw, that, from earliest childhood, my tastes, studies, pursuits had all combined to fit me for this end. I had exhibited a passion for dramatic performances when I was little more than an infant. I had played plays before I ever entered a theatre. I had written plays from the time that I first witnessed a performance. My love for the drama was genuine, for it was developed at a period when the theatre was an unknown place, and actors a species of mythical creatures. I determined to fulfil the destiny which seemed visibly pointed out by the unerring finger of Providence in all the circumstances, associations, and vicissitudes of my life, in my intellectual tastes and habits, and the sympathies of my emotional nature. I would become an actress.

Mr. Mowatt's appreciation of the drama was, I think, even greater than my own. My wishes met with a ready response from him. His only fear was, that I had not physical strength to endure the excitement and fatigue of an arduous vocation. This had to be tested.

The consent of one other person was all I required; it was that of my father. I had not courage personally to communicate my intentions. Mr. Mowatt, in a private interview with him, explained the state of his



own affairs, the theatrical propositions I had received, and my resolves, should these resolutions meet with his sanction. After they had conversed for some time I could endure the suspense no longer, and entered the room. My father spoke but two words as I silently put my arms about his neck. They were, "Brave girl!" Talismanic words were they to me; and ever after, when my spirits flagged, they sounded in my ears, and cheered me, and stimulated me, and made me "brave." His consent, though not withheld, was given with some reluctance. But he had greater fears for my health than for my success. He assured me — and my ready ears drank in the words of promise — that, if I had sufficient self-possession to act in public as he had seen me perform in private, my success was certain.

Before I had contemplated the possibility of becoming an actress, I had partly engaged to write another comedy for the Park Theatre. The managers desired that the hero should be a young instead of an old man, as in *Fashion*. The part was to be adapted to the abilities of their leading juvenile comedian, Mr. C——. This gentleman's performance of the Count, in *Fashion*, had won him much well-deserved applause. Mr. C—— was consulted concerning the character which I purposed writing for him, and paid us several visits. The play was abandoned, in consequence of my determination to enter the profession; and this change was at once communicated to him.

I desired to make my first appearance in some of the cities of the Union where I was not personally known, and to study and practise my profession before I made my *début* in New York. Mr. C——, however, convinced us that this course would be unwise. The Park

✓ *Park*  
was the one theatre in the Union that could give the stamp of legitimacy — my *début* must be made there. I could afterwards travel and gain experience before I accepted a second engagement in New York. He also represented to us that I needed an instructor to make me acquainted with the traditionary “stage business” of old-established plays; one who could, at the same time, sustain opposite characters to me, and who would relieve me from the fatigue of directing rehearsals. He assured us that he had played the whole range of youthful heroes with Miss Faucitt and other English stars of note, and had been well drilled in the duties of stage manager in English and Scottish theatres.

Before I even made my *début* he had entered into the following contract with Mr. Mowatt: I was to appear on the closing night of the season, at the Park Theatre, for his benefit. He was to travel with us and play opposite parts to me for one year, sharing equally the proceeds of every engagement. He was to assist in conducting the business arrangements, superintend all rehearsals, and afford me all the dramatic instruction in his power. It was soon represented to us by managers that this arrangement was hardly a fair one; but Mr. Mowatt was too honorable not to adhere to a contract once made, however disadvantageous it might prove.

The instant my projected appearance was announced, I had to encounter a flood of remonstrances from relatives and friends — opposition in every variety of form. But tears, entreaties, threats, supplicating letters could only occasion me much suffering — they could not shake my resolution.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Preparations for Début.—First Rehearsal with the Company.—Stage Fright.—Star Dressing Room.—Call Boy's Amusement.—A Boast opportunely recalled.—Rising of the Curtain.—The Début.—Second Appearance in public.—Walnut Street Theatre.—A distressing Incident.—Indignation of an Audience.—Painful Discovery.—Conclusion of Engagement.—Fashion performed for Mr. Blake's Benefit.—First Appearance as Gertrude.*

THE day of my *début* was fixed. It was in the month of June, 1845. I had three weeks only for preparation. Incessant study, training,—discipline of a kind which the actor-student alone can appreciate,—were indispensable to perfect success. I took fencing lessons, to gain firmness of position and freedom of limb. I used dumb bells, to overcome the constitutional weakness of my arms and chest. I exercised my voice during four hours every day, to increase its power. I wore a voluminous train for as many hours daily, to learn the graceful management of queenly or classic robes. I neglected no means that could fit me to realize my beau idéal of Campbell's lines:—

“ But by the mighty actor brought,  
Illusion's perfect triumphs come;  
Verse ceases to be airy thought,  
And sculpture to be dumb.”

The day before my *début*, it was necessary that I should rehearse with the company. I found this a severer ordeal than performing before the public. Once

more I stood upon the dimly-lighted, gloomy stage, not now in the position of an author, to observe, to criticize, to suggest, but to be observed, to be criticized, very possibly — nay, very *probably* — to be ridiculed, if I betrayed the slightest ignorance of what I attempted. There is always a half-malicious curiosity amongst actors to witness the shortcomings of a novice. They invariably experience strong inclinations to prophesy failure. No wonder; for they know best the nice subtleties of their own art — the unexpected barriers that start up between the neophyte and his goal.

Only those actors who are engaged in the scene rehearsed are permitted to occupy the stage. The play was the *Lady of Lyons*. Mrs. Vernon, as Madame Deschapelles, and I, as Pauline, took our seats to open the first scene. The actors crowded around the wings, eager to pass judgment on the trembling *débutante*. The stage manager, seated at his table, scanned her with cold and scrutinizing eyes. The pale prompter laid his book upon his knee, that he might stare at her more deliberately. Even the sleepy little call boy, regardless of the summons in his hand, put on the sapient look and attitude of a critic.

“If I could but shut out all these eyes!” I said to myself. But, turn whatever way I would, they met me — hemmed me in on all sides — girdled me with freezing influences.

After we had taken our seats, there was a moment’s awful silence. It was broken by Mr. Barry’s dignified (he *was* alarmingly dignified) “Commence, if you please.”

Mrs. Vernon spoke the first lines of the play. By a resolute effort, forcing myself into composure, I replied.

I cannot tell why, but the sound of my own voice, distinct and untremulous, reassured me. The Rubicon was passed. I thought no more of the surrounding eyes, so full of "speculation" — of the covert ill wishes — of the secret condemnations. I gave myself up to the part, and acted with all the *abandon* and intensity of which I was capable.

During the rehearsal of the third act, I was startled by a sudden burst of applause. It came from a crowd of actors at the side scenes — an involuntary and most unusual tribute. To say that it produced no effect upon me would be affectation. For a moment my equanimity was pleurably destroyed. I had tasted the first drop in the honeyed cup of success.

"Go on, if you please — go on," said Mr. Barry, noticing the pause — and I went on.

The play continued and ended without further interruption. When it was over, the company gathered around me with tokens of undisguised interest. From many lips I received the delightful assurance that, if I was not frightened at night, I should achieve a great triumph.

"I shall *not* be frightened," I answered confidently.

"Not be frightened!" reiterated Mr. Skerrett, (he was at that time the low comedian of the Park Theatre;) "don't 'lay any such flattering unction to your soul.' When night comes, you will be frightened half out of your senses — you don't know what *stage fright* is!"

"I have a talisman to keep off stage fright — the *motive* that brings me upon the stage."

"We shall see!" was his incredulous answer.

None but actors can thoroughly comprehend the

meaning of the appalling words "stage fright," — the nightmare of the profession — a sensation of icy terror, to which no language can give adequate utterance. I have seen veteran actors, who had studied some new character until every syllable of the author seemed indelibly written on their brains, — who had rehearsed their parts with the most *telling* enthusiasm, — who gloried in the prospect of making a "hit," — at last, when night came, and they stood before the footlights to embody the ideal creation for the first time, I have seen them seized with a sudden tremor — their utterance choked — their eyes rolling about, or fixed on vacancy — their limbs shaking, and every faculty paralyzed.

I was not initiated into the horrors of "stage fright" on the first night of my performance. But the dramatic incubus visited me in its worst form on an equally important occasion. Nor was the attack the sole one in my professional life. By what magic the demon can be exorcised, remains an undiscovered mystery.

The morning of my *début* was passed with my sisters. Scarcely an allusion was made to the trying event which must take place that evening. The rich apparel, spread out upon the bed, received its finishing touches at their hands, and was consecrated by a few silent tears. One of my sisters only — Julia, the youngest — had courage to be present when that attire was worn.

My costume was chosen by Mrs. Vernon, almost the first actress with whom I became acquainted — a lady highly respected and beloved in the profession. Her name and that of her relatives have done honor to the stage for a long series of years.

As we drove to the theatre at night, the carriage

passed my father's house. There was a group at the window watching for us. Handkerchiefs waved as long as we were in sight.

I cannot help wondering what sort of place the world in general imagine the "star dressing room" to be. In the days of my nescience I presumed that it was a sort of boudoir, prettily and comfortably furnished, to which the princesses of the stage retired to take their luxurious ease. But O, the difference! The "star dressing room" is usually a small closet-like apartment, with a few strips of well-worn baize or carpet on the floor. A rude wooden shelf runs along one side of the wall, and serves as a dressing table, A dingy looking glass, a couple of superannuated chairs, a rickety washstand, — these are, generally speaking, the richest luxuries of the locality. Such was the "star dressing room" to which I was introduced at the Park Theatre. Mr. Mowatt's request obtained for me a liliputian sofa, so particularly hard that it was at once recognizable as a theatrical "property" — a thing of sham, designed for the deception of an audience. I believe even the demand for this delusive accessory to comfort was considered very unreasonable.

I was just dressed when there came a slight tap upon the door, accompanied by the words, "Pauline, you are called."

I opened the door. The call boy stood without — the inseparable long strip of paper between his fingers. I inquired who he wanted.

"You, ma'am; you are called."

"What a singular piece of familiarity!" I thought to myself. "It is I whom he is addressing as 'Pauline.'" I did not suspect that it was customary to

call the performers by the names of the characters assumed.

"Called for what?" I inquired, in a manner that was intended to impress the daring offender with a sense of the respect due to me.

"For *what*?" he retorted, prolonging the *what* with an indescribably humorous emphasis, and thrusting his tongue against his cheek, "why, for the stage, to be sure! That's the *what*!"

"O!" was all I could say; and the little urchin ran down stairs smothering his laughter. Its echo, however, reached me from the greenroom, where, after making his "call," he had probably related my unsophisticated inquiry.

At that moment Mr. Mowatt came to conduct me to the stage. Mrs. Vernon, who played my mother, was already seated at a small table in Madame Deschapelles' drawing room. I took my place on a sofa opposite to her, holding in my hand a magnificent bouquet, Claude's supposed offering to Pauline.

After a few whispered words of encouragement, Mr. Mowatt left me, to witness the performance from the front of the house. Somebody spread my Pauline scarf on the chair beside me. Somebody else arranged the folds of my train symmetrically. Somebody's fingers gathered into their place a few stray curls. The stage manager gave the order of "Clear the stage, ladies and gentlemen," and I heard sound the little bell for the raising of the curtain.

Until that moment I do not think a pulse in my frame had quickened its beating. But then I was seized with a stifling sensation, as though I were choking. I could only gasp out, "Not yet — I cannot!"



Of course, there was general confusion. Managers, actors, prompter, all rushed on the stage; some offered water, some scent bottles, some fanned me. Every body seemed prepared to witness a fainting fit, or an attack of hysterics, or something equally ridiculous. I was arguing with myself against the absurdity of this ungovernable emotion — this humiliating exhibition — and making a desperate endeavor to regain my self-possession, when Mr. Skerrett thrust his comic face over somebody's shoulder. He looked at me with an expression of quizzical exultation, and exclaimed, —

“Didn't I tell you so? Where's all the courage, eh?”

The words recalled my boast of the morning; or rather, they recalled the recollections upon which that boast was founded. My composure returned as rapidly as it had departed. I laughed at my own weakness.

“Are you getting better?” kindly inquired the stage manager.

“Let the curtain rise!” was the satisfactory answer.

Mr. Barry clapped his hands, — a signal for the stage to be vacated, — the crowd at once disappeared. Madame Deschappelles and Pauline sat alone, as before. The tinkling bell of warning rang, and the curtain slowly ascended, disclosing first the footlights, then the ocean of heads beyond them in the pit, then the brilliant array of ladies in the boxes, tier after tier, and finally the thronged galleries. I found those footlights an invaluable aid to the necessary illusion. They formed a dazzling barrier, that separated the spectator from the ideal world in which the actor dwelt. Their glare prevented the eye from being distracted by objects without the precincts of that luminous semicircle.

They were a friendly protection, a warm comfort, an idealizing auxiliary.

The *débutante* was greeted warmly. This was but a matter-of-course compliment paid by a New York audience to the daughter of a well-known citizen.

"Bow! bow!" whispered a voice from behind the scenes. And I obediently bent my head.

"Bow to your right!" said the voice, between the intervals of applause. I bowed to the right.

"Bow to the left!" I bowed to the left.

"Bow again!" I bowed again and again while the noisy welcome lasted.

The play commenced, and, with the first words I uttered, I concentrated my thoughts, and tried to forget that I had any existence save that of the scornful Lady of Lyons. When we rose from our seats and approached the footlights, Mrs. Vernon gave my hand a reassuring pressure. It was a kindness scarcely needed. I had lost all sensation of alarm. The play progressed as smoothly as it commenced. In the third act, where Pauline first discovers the treachery of Claude, the powers of the actress begin to be tested. Every point told, and was rewarded with an inspiring burst of applause. The audience had determined to blow into a flame the faintest spark of merit.

In the fourth act, I became greatly exhausted with the unusual excitement and exertion. There seemed a probability that I would not have physical strength to enable me to finish the performance. Mrs. Vernon has often laughingly reminded me how she shook and pinched me when I was lying, to all appearance, tenderly clasped in her arms. She maintains that, by these means, she constantly roused me to consciousness. I

am her debtor for the friendly pinches and opportune shakes.

In the fifth act, Pauline's emotions are all of calm and abject grief—the faint, hopeless strugglings of a broken heart. My very weariness aided the personation. The pallor of excessive fatigue, the worn-out look, tottering walk, and feeble voice, suited Pauline's deep despair. The audience attributed to an actor's consummate skill that which was merely a painful and accidental reality.

The play ended, the curtain fell. It would be impossible to describe my sensations of relief as I watched that welcome screen of coarse, green baize slowly unrolling itself and dropping between the audience and the stage. Then came the call before the curtain—the crossing the stage in front of the footlights. Mr. C—— led me out. The whole house rose, even the ladies—a compliment seldom paid. I think it *rained* flowers; for bouquets, wreaths of silver, and wreaths of laurel fell in showers around us. Cheer followed cheer as they were gathered up and laid in my arms. The hats of gentlemen, and handkerchiefs of ladies waved on every side. I courtesied my thanks, and the welcome green curtain once more shut out the brilliant assemblage. Then came the deeper, truer sense of thankfulness. The trial was over; the *débutante* had stood the test; she had not mistaken the career which had been clearly pointed out as the one for which she was destined.

The carriage stopped at my father's house as we drove home. He had heard the wheels, and opened the coach door himself. Fondly and closely was one occupant of that carriage pressed to his heart. My sense of

distinctive appreciation must have been blunted indeed if his words of congratulation did not fall sweeter upon my ears than all the applause that was still echoing within them. He had witnessed the performance from a private box, but I had not been aware of his presence.

The next morning the press were unanimous in commendation. The journals of the day were filled with gratifying predictions — prophecies that have not remained wholly unrealized.

Offers of engagements in all the principal theatres throughout the Union now poured in upon us. The first engagement that we accepted was at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, where *Fashion* had been produced.

I made my appearance there a few nights after my *début* in New York. If I had abundant cause for gratitude and self-congratulation on the first night of my appearance in public, I suffered enough upon the second to atone for all the elation or vanity of which I may have been guilty.

Mr. C——'s contract stipulated that he should play opposite characters to me in whatever theatre we appeared. Mr. Wheatley was an established favorite at the Walnut Street Theatre. He had enacted, to the satisfaction of the audience, the same *rôle* that Mr. C—— was called upon to assume. The manager remonstrated at Mr. Wheatley's being displaced; various friends assured us that the public would demand him as my support; but what could be done? Mr. C—— had the right of supporting me by contract; he could not be asked to forego a right so advantageous. *Had* he been asked, he would certainly have given an indignant refusal.

The play was the *Lady of Lyons*. The house was crowded to its utmost capacity. For the second time I took my seat upon the small sofa to represent Pauline Deschappelles. The curtain rose. The welcome was fully as cordial as in New York. The first act and the second act passed off uninterruptedly as before. In the third, Pauline is thrown constantly with Claude. I observed that Mr. C—— hesitated in the words of his part; now and then he spoke in a thick voice; he walked with an unsteady step; and when the business of the play required him to take my hand, his own trembled violently.

"This is what actors call '*stage fright*,'" was my internal reflection; "he knows that the audience desire Mr. Wheatley in this part; and he is so much alarmed that he cannot act."

This misplaced emotion, as I thought it, on the part of Claude, distracted my attention, and prevented my identifying myself with the character of Pauline.

In the fourth act, during the scene between the widow and Pauline, Beauseant and Pauline, I began to recover my suspended faculties. Claude enters; and with the first words he uttered came that sound, more fearful than all others to an actor's ears — a hiss — a faint one, still a hiss! I heard Claude groan and ejaculate something in an undertone. I felt indignant at the want of generosity displayed by the audience. As the act advanced, the hisses were repeated whenever he spoke. A succession of false notes in a concert could not have a more jarring effect upon the nerves. I could scarcely remember a line of my part, and, immediately after the curtain fell, had not the slightest recollection how the act ended.

After a change of attire, Pauline appears alone in the fifth act. When the scene opened, the audience loudly testified by their greeting that no share of their displeasure was intended for me. I was too much agitated to attempt to personate Pauline as I had done on a previous occasion. I mechanically uttered the words of the text. The anticipation of Claude's appearance, which must take place in a few moments, had filled me with dread — a fear that was too well founded. The audience allowed him to enter, and were silent. Pauline makes her appeal to Colonel Damas ; Claude advances, and she approaches him. Without looking at him, I hurried over the language of the part, not waiting for his few words of reply, and turned to the table, where the father and mother of Pauline were seated. Then Claude *must* speak. The hisses of the audience were deafening. The theatre seemed suddenly filled with snakes. I turned round instinctively ; the pit had risen in a body with evident intention of violence. (I afterwards heard that they were prepared to fling brickbats at the offending Claude.) I did not suspect in what manner Mr. C—— had deserved their displeasure. That he chanced to be an Englishman was, I imagined, his principal crime ; and the audience chose that I should appear with my own countryman, Mr. Wheatley, their avowed favorite.

Advancing to the front of the stage, I rapidly entreated their forbearance. What I said I have not the remotest idea ; for I acted on impulse, and under strong excitement, believing that I was only preventing a gross injustice. Instantaneously every seat was resumed. A dead silence prevailed while I spoke, and applause took the place of hisses. There were too many true gentle-

men present for Mr. C—— to have any thing further to fear, little as he merited the defence. A faint attempt was made to conclude the play. The audience offered no opposition, and in a few minutes the curtain fell.

I was unwilling to respond to the "call," but yielded to the request of the managers. Mr. C—— offered to lead me out. I knew that it was unwise to accept his services, but I could not refuse them without wounding him more deeply. He stooped to gather the bouquets with which the audience, in anticipation of a performance very different from the one they had witnessed, came supplied. Then I noticed that he reeled from side to side, and, after bending down, could scarcely regain his equilibrium. I thought it very strange that his "stage fright" deprived him of the faculty of moving about without staggering, when the play was ended. The instant we were behind the scenes again, he gave way to an extravagant burst of grief, and darted off, followed by several of his friends.

Mr. Mowatt was leading me to my dressing room when I overheard the Madame Deschapelles of the evening say to another lady, "He got no more than he deserved — I wish they had *brickbated* him — the man was as drunk as he could be!"

"What a shame!" I involuntarily exclaimed, turning to Mr. Mowatt; "did you hear what that woman said?"

"Yes," he replied, "and it is too true. I saw you did not suspect his situation, and purposely left you in ignorance."

Suspect it? The idea that he was intoxicated never once entered my head. Nor was it remarkable that I should not have recognized the workings of the enemy

which "men put into their mouths to steal away their brains;" for up to that period it had been my fortune to witness few similar exhibitions.

The painful impressions of that wretched night very nearly gave me a distaste for the profession — but I had not entered it for amusement.

The next night Mr. C—— made an apology to the audience, stating that he had been led into an unwonted indiscretion while "dining out," and entreating their indulgence. They pardoned him *nominally*, but rarely bestowed upon his best efforts any evidence of approval. The engagement was a trying one, and I rejoiced when it was concluded. The houses were but half filled, and I labored under a sense of depression which nothing could remove.

At the close of the fortnight Mr. C—— returned to New York, and I remained one night in Philadelphia to appear for the benefit of Mr. Blake, the stage manager. He selected *Fashion* as the play to be represented, and persuaded me to enact *Gertrude*. The character affords no opportunity for the display of dramatic abilities, and I reluctantly consented. Once more an audience as fashionable and as crowded as the one which witnessed the miseries of my first night in Philadelphia graced the theatre. Mr. Wheatley appeared in his original part of the Count, and was received with enthusiasm. Mr. Blake's Adam Trueman was more truthful and touching than ever. The play could not on any occasion have given more satisfaction.



## CHAPTER XIII.

*The first Year on the Stage. — Two Hundred Performances. — Amount of Study. — Lady Teazle's untimely Drowsiness. — First Shakspearian Impersonation. — Difference between Rehearsing and Acting. — Juliet's Tomb. — Scene Shifter's sepulchral Prediction. — Novel Substitute for a Sleeping Potion. — Death of Paris by a Novice. — Two Schools of Acting. — Anecdote of a Stranger. — Mrs. Haller's colored Descendants. — Incident in Charleston. — Address to the Charleston Volunteers. — Complimentary Entertainment in Savannah. — Relationship which Actors hold to each other.*

WE made the tour of the United States, and met with an uninterrupted series of successes.

Every night not consumed in travelling was engaged at various theatres for a year in advance. In New York we fulfilled a long engagement at Niblo's, but did not appear again at the Park Theatre until spring. In that first year I acted *two hundred nights*.

When I made my *début* I was only prepared in one part; yet, before the close of the year, I had enacted all the most popular characters in juvenile comedy and tragedy. From this fact some estimate may be formed of the amount of study requisite. Often after a protracted rehearsal in the morning, and an arduous performance at night, I returned home from the theatre wearied out in mind and body; yet I dared not rest. The character to be represented on the succeeding night still required several hours of reflection and application. Sometimes I kept myself awake by bathing my heavy eyes and throbbing temples with iced water as I com-

mitted the words to memory. Sometimes I could only battle with the angel who

“Knits up the ravelled sleeve of care”

by rapidly pacing the room while I studied. Now and then I was fairly conquered, and fell asleep over my books.

Strange to say, my health, instead of failing entirely, as was predicted, visibly improved. The deleterious effects of late hours were counteracted by constant exercise, an animating, exhilarating pursuit, and the all-potent *nepenthe* of inner peace. I gained new vigor and elasticity. With the additional burden came the added strength whereby it could be borne.

As may be readily imagined, I was often weary to exhaustion, even during the performance. On one occasion my fatigue very nearly placed me in a predicament as awkward to me as it would have been amusing to the audience. We were fulfilling a long engagement at Niblo's. I was playing Lady Teazle in the School for Scandal. When Lady Teazle, at the announcement of Sir Peter, is concealed behind the screen in Joseph Surface's library, she is compelled to remain a quarter of an hour, or perhaps twenty minutes, in this confinement. I was dreadfully fatigued, and glad of the opportunity to rest. There was no chair. At first I knelt for relief. Becoming tired of that position, I quietly laid myself down, and, regardless of Lady Teazle's ostrich plumes, made a pillow of my arms for my head. I listened to Placide's most humorous personation of Sir Peter for a while; but gradually his voice grew more and more indistinct, melting into a soothing murmur, and then was heard no more. I fell into a

profound sleep. When Charles Surface is announced, Sir Peter is hurried by Joseph into the closet. Lady Teazle (according to Sheridan) peeps from behind the screen, and intimates to Joseph the propriety of locking Sir Peter in, and proposes her own escape. At the sound of Charles Surface's step, she steals behind the screen again. The cue was given, but no Lady Teazle made her appearance. She was slumbering in happy unconsciousness that theatres were ever instituted.

Mr. Jones, the prompter, supposing that I had forgotten my part, ran to one of the wings from which he could obtain a view behind the screen. To his mingled diversion and consternation, he beheld Lady Teazle placidly sleeping upon the floor. Of course, he could not reach her. I have often heard him relate the frantic manner in which he shouted, in an imploring stage whisper, "Mrs. Mowatt, wake-up! For goodness' sake, wake up! Charles Surface is just going to pull the screen down! Wake up! You'll be caught by the audience asleep! Wake up! Good gracious, *do* wake up!"

I have some confused recollection of hearing the words "wake up! wake up!" As I opened my heavy eyes, they fell upon Mr. Jones, making the most violent gesticulations, waving about his prompt book, and almost dancing in the excitement of his alarm. The hand of Charles Surface was already on the screen. I sprang to my feet, hardly remembering where I was, and had barely time to smooth down my train when the screen fell. A moment sooner, and how would the slumbering Lady Teazle, suddenly awakened, have contrived to impress the audience with the sense of her deep contrition for her imprudence! how persuaded her husband

that she had discovered her injustice to him during her pleasant nap !

The second character which I enacted was Juliana, in Tobin's comedy of the Honeymoon. I plead guilty to the bad taste of delineating with especial delight the piquant shrewishness of the "painter's daughter."

My third character was the Bride of Lammermoor.

And then, with timid reverence, I ventured to bow the knee at the shrine of the mighty master. My whole being merged itself into the impassioned existence of Shakspeare's Juliet.

During the drudgery of rehearsal, the actor drops disenchanted from the realms of cloudland, where he dwelt with the ideal creations of the poet. The incongruous elements that compose, the frigid atmosphere that pervades, a theatre blind his mental vision. He struggles in vain to catch the golden rays that flooded his spirit in its serene seclusion. The prismatic hues of imagination fade into utter darkness before the conventionalities of his profession. All the delicacies of his inspired conception suddenly vanish, and he stands with the bare, cold outline of what he designed, before him, powerless to clothe it with beauty. Thus I felt when I first attempted to rehearse Juliet. Disappointed and dispirited, I turned wearily from the task.

But when night comes, and the actor lays aside his personality with his every-day garments, the Promethean fire is rekindled — he reascends the height from which he fell in the morning — external circumstances lie beneath his feet — his gaze is upward, not downward — he not imbodyes merely, but *ensouls* the emanation of the poet's mind. Such were my experiences when I first had the hardihood to enact Juliet.

No character ever excited me more intensely. Juliet's dagger, too impetuously used, more than once drew blood. But I found the sensation of stabbing one's self any thing but poetic; the dagger's point was consequently dulled into harmlessness. Once I forgot this necessary appendage of the heroine in the last act. Romeo, who was lying dead upon the ground, was better provided. As I stooped to loosen the steel from his girdle, the poisoned lover, who was aware of my stabbing episodes, came suddenly to life, and whispered, in a sepulchral tone, "Look out — it's very sharp — you'll stab yourself."

I well remember my sensations the first time I was ever laid in Juliet's tomb. The friar tells her that, according to the custom of her country, she shall be borne

"In her best robes, uncovered, on the bier."

Adhering to the text, I have since worn bridal attire in place of the shroud-like dress usually adopted by stage Juliets. But that night a loose white muslin robe, drawn in folds around the throat, and fastened with a cord at the waist, was the garment accidentally chosen for me. It was too palpably suited to the bier. The walls of the tomb were hung with black. An antique lamp, that shed a luridly-green light upon my face, was suspended from the centre of the sombre, though temporary, enclosure. As I lay waiting for Romeo to kill Paris and break open the doors of the sepulchre, I overheard the whispered conversation of some scene shifters who stood without. They were each holding a cord attached to the doors of the tomb. The cords, according to stage direction, were to be loosened at the third blow of Romeo's "wrenching iron." The worthy

scene shifters passed sentence of death upon me with admirable *sang froid*, and decided that I would soon be lying "for good" and "in earnest" where I was then reposing as Juliet's representative — in the tomb.

To use the expressive language of one of the men, I was "booked for the other world, and no mistake!" Their *grave* predictions were interrupted by Romeo's first blow upon the door. I was not particularly sorry when the funereal portals flew back, and he bore me out of the mock sepulchre.

Juliet was one of the characters in which I seemed fated to be placed in constant peril of life or limb. Several times the balcony, from which the loving lady of Verona makes her midnight confession to Romeo, was dangerously insecure. Once a portion of the railing, over which I was leaning, forgetful of its *representative nature*, gave way. Had I not dropped suddenly on my knees, Juliet must have been precipitated into Romeo's arms before he expected her, and very probably would not have visited Friar Lawrence's cell that night.

One evening, the property man — so the individual who has the charge of potions, amulets, caskets of jewels, purses filled with any quantity of golden coin, and other theatrical treasures, designated as stage properties, is styled — forgot the bottle containing Juliet's sleeping potion. The omission was only discovered at the moment the vial was needed. Some bottle must be furnished to the Friar, or he cannot utter the solemn charge with which he confides the drug to the perplexed scion of the Capulets. The property man, confused at discovering his own neglect, and fearful of the fine to which it would subject him, caught up the first small bottle at

hand, and gave it to the Friar. The vial was the prompter's, and contained *ink*. When Juliet snatched the fatal potion from the Friar's hand, he whispered something in an undertone. I caught the words, "so take care," but was too absorbed in my part to comprehend the warning. Juliet returns home — meets her parents — retires to her own chamber — dismisses her nurse — and finally drinks the potion. At the words, —

"Romeo! this do I drink to thee!"

I placed the bottle to my lips, and unsuspectingly swallowed the inky draft! The dark stain upon my hands and lips might have been mistaken for the quick workings of the poison, for the audience remained ignorant of the mishap, which I only half comprehended. When the scene closed, the prompter rushed up to me, exclaiming, "Good gracious! you have been drinking from my bottle of ink!" I could not resist the temptation of quoting the remark of the dying wit under similar circumstances — "Let me swallow a sheet of blotting paper!" The frightened prompter, however, did not understand the joke.

The misfortunes that attended the representation of Romeo and Juliet that night did not all fall upon me. The part of Paris was intrusted to a promising young novice. He delivered the language with scholarly precision, and might have passed for an actor until he came to the fighting scene with Romeo. Romeo disarmed him with a facility which did great credit to the good nature of Paris, for whom life had, of course, lost its charms with Juliet. It then became the duty of Paris, who is mortally wounded, *to die*. The Paris on this occasion took his death blow very kindly. His

dying preparations were made with praiseworthy deliberation. First he looked over one shoulder, and then over the other, to find a soft place where he might fall — it was evidently his intention to yield up his existence as comfortably as possible. Having satisfied himself in the selection of an advantageous spot, he dropped down gently, breaking his descent in a manner not altogether describable. As he softly laid himself back, he informed Romeo of the calamity that had befallen him by ejaculating, —

“O, I am slain !”

The audience hissed their rebellion at such an easy death.

“If thou art merciful —”

continued Paris — the audience hissed more loudly still, as though calling upon Romeo to show no mercy to a man who died so luxuriously.

“Open the tomb, and —”

faltered Paris — but what disposition he preferred to be made of the mortal mould, upon which he had bestowed such care, no Romeo could have heard ; for the redoubled hisses of the audience drowned all other sounds, and admonished Paris to precipitate his departure to the other world.

The next day, the young aspirant for dramatic distinction was summoned by the manager, and asked what he meant by dying in such a manner on the night previous.

“Why, I thought that I did the thing in the most gentlemanly style,” replied the discomfited Thespian.

“How came you to look behind you, sir, before you fell ?” angrily inquired the manager.



"Surely you wouldn't have had me drop down without looking out to see what I was going to strike against?"

"Do you suppose a man, when he is killed in reality, looks behind him for a convenient spot before he falls, sir?"

"But I wasn't killed in reality, and I was afraid of dislocating my shoulder!" pleaded Paris.

"Afraid of dislocating your shoulder! If you are afraid of breaking your leg or your neck either, when you are acting," said the stern manager, "you're not fit for this profession. Your instinct of self-preservation is too large for an actor's economy. You're dismissed, sir; there's no employment here for persons of your cautious temperament."

There are two distinct schools of acting, and it is a disputed point which is the greater. The actor of the one school totally loses his own individuality, and abandons himself to all the absorbing emotions that belong to the character he interprets. His tears are real, his laughter real, as real to himself as to the audience. Frequently they are *more* real to himself than to his listeners; for the capacity of feeling, and the faculty of expressing the sensation experienced, are widely different. The current upon which the actor is borne away may, or may not, be strong enough to bear the spectator upon its bosom. Byron says, —

"The poet claims our tears; but by your leave,  
Before we shed them, *let us see him grieve!*"

But audiences say nothing of the kind. They are oftener moved by what is simulated than by what is felt.

The paste jewel glitters more brightly in their eyes than the diamond of pure water.

The actor of an opposite school, if he be a thorough artist, is more certain of producing startling effects. He stands unmoved amidst the boisterous seas, the whirlwinds of passion, swelling around him. He exercises perfect command over the emotions of the audience; seems to hold their heartstrings in his hands, to play upon their sympathies as on an instrument; to electrify or subdue his hearers by an effort of volition; but not a pulse in his own frame beats more rapidly than its wont. His personations are cut out of marble; they are grand, sublime, but no heart throbs within the life-like sculpture. Such was the school of the great Talma. This absolute power over others, combined with perfect self-command, is pronounced by a certain class of critics the perfection of dramatic art.

I have acted with distinguished tragedians, who, after some magnificent burst of pathos which seemed wrung from the inmost depths of the soul, while the audience were deafening themselves, and us, with their frantic applause, quietly turned to their brethren with a comical grimace and a few muttered words of satirical humor that caused an irresistible burst of laughter. Heads were turned away, and handkerchiefs stuffed into mouths, but the "*star* of the goodlie companie" stood rapt in unconsciousness, very touching to the audience, but particularly trying to the convulsed actors.

✓ This singular faculty of keeping a "stage existence" totally distinct from the actor's own personality, has many times been ludicrously exhibited to me. I mention an illustrative occasion.

I was fulfilling an engagement in one of the English

provincial towns. The play was the Stranger. An old-established favorite of that audience enacted the Stranger, and with considerable power. It was the first night this gentleman had assumed an opposite character to me. We had never exchanged words, except a courteous "good morning" when we met at rehearsal, and a "good evening" at night. The play had made a deep impression upon the audience. During the fifth act, when Mrs. Haller implores her injured husband to allow her to behold her children once more, the sound of weeping throughout the house was distinctly audible upon the stage. Mrs. Haller had just spoken the words, "Let me kiss the features of their father in his babes, and I will kneel to you, and part with them forever."

The Stranger turned to raise me from my knees, and, as he did so, whispered, in the most lachrymose voice, "Poor things, they want umbrellas in front!" Then, in precisely the same tone, he uttered aloud the words of his part — "Willingly, Adelaide. I have despatched a servant for them to the neighboring village. He should be back by this time. When he arrives, they shall be conducted to the castle. They may remain with you until daybreak. Then they must go with me!"

The sobs of the audience increased. In the same tone of deep anguish the Stranger murmured, as he again leaned over me, "It's raining so fast in the boxes that those poor fellows in the pit will catch their death of cold. I'd better send umbrellas round!" Not a muscle of his countenance changed; his face retained its heart-broken expression, and he sadly and deliberately wiped the supposed tears from his eyes.

I had no such control over my risible propensities. I could only bury my face in my handkerchief; but fortunately the laughter which I could not suppress had an hysterical sound not inappropriate to Mrs. Haller.

✓ No amount of study or discipline could have enabled me to belong to the grand and passionless school. I never succeeded in stirring the hearts of others unless I was deeply affected myself. The putting off of *self-consciousness* was, with me, the first imperative element of success. Yet I agree with those who maintain that the highest school of art is that in which the actor, Prospero-like, raises or stills tempestuous waves by the magical force of his will — produces and controls, *without sharing*, the emotions of his audience.

The anecdote I have just related is not the only ludicrous one associated in my mind with the play of the Stranger. An amusing incident occurred one night during that play's representation in Savannah. I was informed at rehearsal that the two children, who usually appeared as Mrs. Haller's forsaken little ones, were ill. No other children could be obtained. Yet children were indispensable adjuncts in the last scene. The play could not be changed at such hasty notice. What could be done?

I was walking up and down behind the scenes, very much annoyed, and wondering how the difficulty could be overcome, when the person who temporarily officiated as my dressing maid accosted me. She was an exceedingly pretty mulatto girl. She saw that I was distressed about the absent children, and, with a great deal of hesitation, offered to supply the deficiency. I brightened at the prospective deliverance from our dilemma, and, telling her that I would be much obliged, inquired to whom the children belonged.

"They are mine, ma'am," she answered, timidly. "I have a couple of pretty little ones very much at your service."

"Yours?" I answered, aghast at the information. "Yours? Why, Mrs. Haller's children are supposed to be white. I am afraid yours won't very readily pass for mine;" and I could hardly help laughing at the supposition.

The young woman took my distressed merriment good naturedly, and replied, "O, my children are not *very* black, seeing as how their father is altogether white!"

"Do you really think they would pass for white children?"

"Why, the little girl has blue eyes, and they have both got hair nearly as light as yours; then you might *powder* them up a bit, if you thought best."

I sent her for the children. They were really lovely little creatures, with clear, cream-colored complexions, and hair that fell in showers of waving ringlets. I decided at once that they would do, and told her to bring them at night in their prettiest dresses, to which I would add any needful additions.

The children do not make their appearance until the last act. After retouching their toilets, instructing them in what they had to do, and feeding them with sugar plums, I told their mother to make them a bed with shawls in the corner of my dressing room. She did so, and they slept quietly through four acts of the play. We gently awakened them for the fifth act. But their sleep was too thoroughly the sweet, deep slumber of happy childhood to be easily dispelled. With great difficulty I made them comprehend where they were, and

what they must do. Even a fresh supply of sugar plums failed to entirely arouse them. The sleepy heads would drop upon their pretty, round shoulders, and they devoured the *bonbons* with closed eyes.

The curtain had risen, and the children must appear upon the stage. I led them to the wing, and gave them in charge of Francis. Francis walked on the stage, holding a child in each hand. The trio had hardly made their appearance when the little girl, thoroughly awakened by the dazzling light, gave one frightened look at the audience, broke away from Francis, and, shrieking loudly, rushed up and down the stage, trying to find some avenue through which she might escape. The audience shouted with laughter, and the galleries applauded the sport. The poor little girl grew more and more bewildered. Francis pursued her, dragging her brother after him. The unexpected exercise, added to his sister's continued cries, alarmed the boy. He screamed in concert, and, after some desperate struggles, obtained his liberty. Francis had now both children to chase about the stage. The boy he soon captured and caught up under his arm, continuing his flight after the girl. She was finally secured. The children, according to stage direction, are to be taken through a little cottage door on the left of the stage. Francis, panting with his exertions, dragged them to the door, which he pushed open with his foot. The struggling children looked in terror at the cottage. They fancied it was the guard house, in which colored persons are liable to be confined if they are found in the streets after a certain hour without a "pass."

Clinging to Francis, they cried out together, "O, don't ee put me in ee guard house! Don't ee put me in ee guard house!"

The accent peculiar to their race, and their allusion to the "guard house," at once betrayed to the audience their parentage. The whole house broke forth into an uproar of merriment. Francis disappeared, but the audience could not be quieted.

I was suffering not a little at the contemplated impossibility of producing the children at the end of the play. But nobody cared to listen to another line. Mrs. Haller's colored children had unceremoniously destroyed every vestige of *illusion*. I made my supplication to "kiss the features of the father in his babes" in the most suppressed tone possible, yet the request produced a fresh burst of laughter. We hurried the play to a close. The entrance of the children, and the excitement produced upon the parents by their presence, we left to the imagination of the spectators. The play ended without the reappearance of the juvenile unfortunates.

A few evenings previous to this comical incident, another of a precisely opposite character took place in Charleston. The play was the same. I mention the anecdote because the morality of the Stranger is by many persons considered dubious. I think this relation proves that, in a mixed audience, there are sometimes beings upon whom the representation of Kotzebue's condemned play may have a beneficial influence. While I was delivering the speech in which Mrs. Haller confesses her crime, the audience were startled by a sudden shriek. The very sound proclaimed that it had been wrung involuntarily from some conscience-stricken heart. A confusion in the dress circle ensued. Then followed hysterical sobs and screams, and a lady was carried by her friends from the theatre.

The next morning a gentleman called upon me, and related the history of the lady whose agitation had disturbed the equanimity of the audience. She was taken home in a state of excitement bordering on frenzy, and confessed that she had been on the eve of bringing upon herself the lifelong miseries endured by Mrs. Haller. I do not feel at liberty to dwell upon the particulars of the story, but the sequel proved that the representation of the Stranger was instrumental in saving at least one frail being from becoming

“Like stars that fall to rise no more.”

✓ Our engagement in Charleston, during this my first season on the stage, was of long duration, and was followed by a succession of prosperous reengagements. The theatre was under the able management of Mr. Forbes. I became very much attached to this warm, southern audience.

When we were about to leave, I was solicited to deliver an address to the Charleston volunteers, in commemoration of their departure for Mexico. I think they were styled the Palmetto Guard. The occasion has left a deep impression on my memory. The stage represented the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The figures of the signers were startlingly life-like, and stood apart every one from the other. Amongst them was my mother's grandfather, Francis Lewis. As the curtain rose, the Star-spangled Banner was sung by the company. They retired at its close, and I came forward from the back of the scene, passing in and out amongst the fathers of our country, until I stood in their centre. The address, by J. A. Requier, Esq., was a stirring production. At the lines, —



“Remember the deeds that your sires have done,  
 Remember the worship your sires have won,  
 Remember the present must soon be a past,  
 And strike like your sires — they struck to the last!” —

when I pointed to the glorious host so admirably represented around me, the excited volunteers started simultaneously from their seats. It was long before their hurricane of responsive cheers would permit the address to proceed.

In less than a week they departed, at the call of their country, on that expedition from which so few of the brave soldiers returned. In the words of the address, —

“Her voice bade them come with the steel and the targe,  
 To stand at the onset and strike at the charge!” —

and perhaps some of them remembered the assurance that the prayers of woman

“Shall watch o’er ye now;  
 Her myrtles shall blossom — a braid on your brow;  
 And her tears shall be brighter, her blushes more sweet,  
 To emblazon success, or to soften defeat.”

Our engagement in Savannah was also under the management of Mr. Forbes. It was one upon which I look back with unmingled pleasure. At its close a committee of gentlemen, formed of the most distinguished residents, gave us a magnificent entertainment in token of their esteem. I record, with, I hope, a justifiable pride, the following extract from their note of invitation: —

“We take this method of at once expressing our thanks for the exquisite enjoyment you have afforded us in your various personations, and our high respect for you personally. A lady of your character and attainments elevates and adorns the stage; and we have

no doubt that your influence will be widely felt in purifying it from the abuses which sometimes mar its beauties, and that you will cause it to perform its proper task —

‘To raise the genius and to mend the heart.’

“Accept, madam, the assurance of our most distinguished regard, and believe that in no city will you have more ardent admirers and warmer friends than in ours.”

Fashion was produced at Charleston, and afterwards at Mobile and New Orleans, with its usual good fortune. To be forced to enact the walking-lady character of Gertrude was a severe punishment. To escape its infliction, I always withheld the production of the comedy until the solicitations of the public and the managers left me no alternative. Could I have foreseen, at the time the play was written, that I should be induced to enter the profession, I would have been careful to create a character which I could embody with pleasure. Yet it was a very few months after Fashion first appeared that I made my own *début*.

The public continued to entertain a strong desire that I should be supported upon the stage by one of my own countrymen. A committee of gentlemen waited upon Mr. Mowatt, in New Orleans, to request that some arrangement might be entered into with Mr. Murdoch to play opposite characters with me. Our contract with Mr. C—— prevented the gratification of these gentlemen’s wishes. I proposed that we should select plays in which Mr. Murdoch and Mr. C—— could both appear in parts of equal importance. An attempt was made to carry out the suggestion; but only one or two plays

could be agreed upon, and the idea was necessarily abandoned.

One amongst the many *appearances* in the profession which are misunderstood by the public is the relationship which exists between actor and actor. The world, in general, cannot readily comprehend the total absence of all personal affinity, and at times of all amicable feeling, between them. When an audience are in the habit of seeing two persons frequently represent the characters of romantic lovers,—enthusiastic husband and wife, or devoted father and daughter,—they imagine that some slight degree of attachment must spring up between the parties—that the gentleman entertains at least a warm admiration for the lady. But, in reality, performers are constantly placed in the most affectionate *stage* relationship towards those whom they personally detest. The bitterest enemies enact Damon and Pythias with a fervor that cheats spectators into the belief that some bond must draw them intimately together in the walks of private life.

It is related of an actress, who lived unhappily with her husband, that she delighted in personating the loving Belvidera to his Jaffier, because it gave her an opportunity of inflicting certain feminine punishments upon him during the *apparently* tender embraces of the Venetian pair. I have faith in the story.

In the course of one long engagement, I nightly enacted the betrothed—the wife, or the daughter—of a gentleman with whom Mr. Mowatt was at variance and to whom I never spoke. Any needful communication at rehearsal was addressed to the prompter. At night, before the audience, he was the most impassioned

of knights, and I the tenderest of "ladie loves" — but one single step *without* the magic circle of the foot-lights, and we were utter strangers. Nor was this coolness the subject of surprise or remark behind the scenes. It was an every-day occurrence in all theatres.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Mr. Davenport. — Accident in Baltimore. — Second Southern Tour — Reading at Macon. — Columbus. — Montgomery. — First Acquaintance with Henry Clay. — His Recollections of Miss O'Neil. — His poetical Obliviousness. — Five Days on board of the Alexander Scott. — Clay's Injunction to me as we passed Memphis. — Mr. Davenport's Entertainment of Mr. Clay. — Personation of a "Down-east" Yankee. — Impromptu Song to Henry Clay. — Arrival at Louisville. — A last Farewell. — Opening of the Athenæum at Cincinnati. — Inaugural Address. — Compliment to Mr. Davenport. — Close of my second Year on the Stage. — Armand. — A Sisterhood of Critics. — Mr. Mowatt's Visit to England to arrange with Managers. — Mr. Macready's Advice. — Engagement for Manchester. — Production of Armand at the Park Theatre and in Boston. — Last Night in America. — Letters from Henry Clay. — Sailing for Europe.*

My engagements for the first year concluded at New Orleans. Our contract with Mr. C——, which then came to an end, was not renewed.

Edward L. Davenport, of Boston, was strongly recommended to Mr. Mowatt by old and leading members of the profession. His high moral character, his unassuming and gentleman-like manners, his wonderful versatility and indisputable talents, caused him to be selected as the person who was to travel with us during my second year on the stage. Upon this selection, every succeeding month and year gave us new cause for congratulation. The prominent position he has since won upon the English stage, and the honors he has received from fastidious English audiences, are the just reward

of intrinsic but most *unostentatious* merit. The American public were doubly satisfied with the choice made of a professional associate, because Mr. Davenport is a countryman.

We commenced our theatrical tour at Buffalo, and made the whole circuit of the United States. Another prosperous year crowned our exertions. Our engagements had but one interruption. That was occasioned by an accident which I unfortunately met with while performing in Baltimore.

The play was the *Honey Moon*, in three acts. Juliana has several rapid changes of costume to effect. When I left the stage to dress for the last time, I darted off at full speed towards my dressing room. The lights behind the scenes were unusually dim. A sofa had carelessly been left in one of the passages. Some tired carpenter was stretched upon it in an attitude which Dickens would have described as peculiarly American. His feet protruded over one arm of the sofa in a somewhat more elevated position than his head. My flight brought me suddenly in contact with a pair of heavy boots. The blow received was so severe that I staggered back, and fell. I had not time to think whether or not I was injured. An actor is always impressed with the conviction that he has no right to private sufferings or emotions during a performance. I dressed hastily, and returned to the stage. The instant I began to speak I experienced a choking sensation, and it was with difficulty that I could give utterance to the necessary words. I struggled on until the middle of the scene, and then was forced to whisper to Mr. Davenport, who enacted the Duke, "Cut the scene—I can't speak!" He imagined that I was suddenly taken ill,

and did "*cut the scene.*" We both, in stage parlance, "came to cues" — most remorselessly mangling the author. The play, nevertheless, seemed interminable, and when it ended I was forced to respond to the call before the curtain, though it was with difficulty that I could stand.

We had scarcely reached home when the effect of the blow became apparent. A blood vessel had been ruptured, and I was nearly suffocated with the sanguineous stream that poured from my lips. According to my physician's opinion, the rupture took place at the time the blow was received, and I had been enabled to keep back the evidence of the injury through a strong effort of will. This is only one of the myriad instances that could be given to prove what an actor can endure under the excitement of representation.

I was, of course, unable to conclude my engagement, but this was the first I had ever broken. For a few days it was supposed that the injury was serious, but through the help of a vigorous constitution it proved otherwise. In a fortnight I was able to travel to Boston, and appeared as Juliet — a part which requires a superabundant amount of physical strength.

Early in the autumn of this second year we commenced our journey south. We acted in all the principal theatres until we reached Macon, on our way to Mobile. No theatre had yet been erected there, and we were solicited to give readings. I read one night to a full audience, and Mr. Davenport diversified the entertainment with songs. In Columbus we devoted another night, and another in Montgomery, to readings, intermingled with Mr. Davenport's ballad singing. I greatly preferred the theatre to the lecture room, and

resolutely refused all solicitation to give a course of readings. In the lecture room I missed the friendly footlights, which form a barrier between the real and the ideal. I longed for the illusion—the self-forgetfulness. On the stage I was *somebody else*—in the lecture room I could not rise out of myself.

✓ Amongst the most agreeable reminiscences of this year are the visits of Henry Clay. We were fulfilling an engagement in New Orleans when he first called upon me. It chanced that my history was well known to him. He took a deep interest in my professional exertions, and his encouragement was not sparingly bestowed. One day he gave me a glowing description of Miss O'Neil's Juliet, especially of the *naïveté* and fervor of her balcony scene. But when he attempted to quote the passages which had impressed him, I could not help laughing involuntarily at his odd deviations from the text.

"I dare say I am *misquoting*," he remarked, apologetically. "I never could remember a line of poetry."

I had to admit that his version of Juliet differed considerably from the one which popular prejudice had adopted—nor could I flatter him by saying that he improved upon Shakspeare.

He then told me that it was a singular fact, and one which had been a subject of regret through his whole life, that he could not by any effort retain verse in his memory. Even if he studied a poem by rote, in a few days the lines would be wholly effaced from the mental tablet on which they had been laboriously written. He related to me an anecdote in painful illustration of this peculiarity. He was making some public address,—I think it was a Fourth of July oration,—during the



course of which he purposed quoting the well-known lines, —

“Lives there a man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land?”

Declaiming warmly, he gave enthusiastic utterance to the line, —

“Lives there a man with soul so dead.”

But the poetic page suddenly became a blank—he could not remember another word. He paused—then repeated the line with more patriotic ardor than before. He thought the second line would “come to him” by means of the repetition—but it came not. He put his hand to his forehead, trying to think *what* the man did “whose soul was so dead”—but the evidence of that individual’s torpid essence would not develop itself in metre. For the third time he asked the question emphatically, not to say despairingly, —

“Lives there a man with soul so dead,” —

and must have paused mid way in his query, had not a voice from the crowd continued, in a stage whisper, —

“Who never to himself hath said.”

The oblivious statesman caught the words, and thankfully finished his quotation. He determined, in future, to ornament his orations with few of these slippery gems of the poet.

Our next engagement took us to Vicksburg, but at its close we rejoined Henry Clay on board of the Alexander Scott. We passed five days in this floating palace on our way to Louisville. Henry Clay was cheered wherever we stopped, and answering cheers were sent

back from the boat. In these the ladies now and then joined.

I was standing beside him when we arrived at Memphis. He turned to me, and said, "Have you ever appeared here?"

I replied in the negative.

He remarked, "This western Memphis makes more gigantic progress than any town I know. She will be the queen city of the west by and by. Never pass here again without appearing."

I answered that I would not. It was six years before I saw Memphis once more; but I kept my word. My appearance was rendered a brief one through sudden indisposition. I remember with regret the improbability that I shall ever stand before a genial Memphis audience again.

Henry Clay passed a large portion of his time in the ladies' saloon. The bearing of our lofty-minded statesman, though always dignified, was characterized by extremest courtesy — courtesy to the lowest as well as the highest. He conversed freely upon all subjects, and with the fluency for which he was distinguished.

"Aged ears played truant with his tales,  
And younger hearings were quite ravished  
With his discourse."

We were one day discussing Lafayette's visit to this country. Some jocular estimate was made of the number of ladies whom he had affectionately saluted. Clay remarked, that "kissing was like the presidency; it was not to be sought, and not to be *declined*." The natural inference from this remark was, that he would not oppose the wishes of his party if they again offered his name as a presidential candidate. The conclusion did not prove erroneous.

He recounted to me a number of anecdotes illustrative of the manner in which his friends demonstrated their grief at the great whig defeat. Some of the most pathetic of these stories had still a touch of the ludicrous; but he seemed to feel most deeply the manifestations of attachment of which he was the object.

Many of the passengers exerted themselves to entertain a fellow-traveller whom every one seemed to treat as his own particular and honored guest; but none contributed so largely to his amusement as Mr. Davenport. He sang comic, patriotic, and sentimental songs, and recited humorous sketches, in which five or six different characters were personated. One evening he entered the saloon disguised as a "down-east" Yankee. I must say, by way of parenthesis, that his Yankee was a *stage* representative of Yankee land—a broad but telling caricature of the reality. He wore a red wig, striped pantaloons that maintained a respectable distance from his ankles, a short jacket, and a flame-colored cravat. He carried his hands deeply thrust in his pockets, as though they had an evident inclination to approach his knees. His "jog-along" gait could only have originated in New England.

He was not recognized when he entered the cabin. The passengers supposed him to be some person who had just come on board. He commenced talking, with a nasal intonation, in a loud and familiar manner, and asking "océans of questions." He gave Mr. Mowatt (who was in the secret) a nudge, and accosted him with, "Stranger, I hear that's Harry Clay; I guess I'll scrape acquaintance with him, if you'll do the polite thing."

Mr. Mowatt presented the Yankee gentleman to Mr.

Clay. The impudent speeches of the "downeaster" to the "best representative of republican royalty," as the Yankee designated the statesman, convulsed the passengers with laughter. Mr. Clay joined in the contagious merriment. Dreading that these personalities might give offence, I took occasion to whisper to him the Yankee's history, and the name which he inherited from his father. Mr. Clay heartily lent himself to the joke.

On the day that we reached Louisville, the passengers requested me to present our eminent countryman with some poetical tribute in commemoration of our journey. I wrote an impromptu song, which was set to music by Mr. Davenport, and sung by him when the passengers assembled in the cabin to take farewell of the statesman.

Mr. Clay made a point of publicly and very graciously thanking Mr. Davenport for the genuine diversion his talents had afforded us all. He wrote in his pocket book a few kind and complimentary lines, of which the gratified actor might well be proud.

We were stepping on shore, when Mr. Clay came up to me, and said, "I have just been very much touched. You know the owners and officers of this boat are all *democrats*; yet they have refused to take any fare for me or my party. I don't know when a trifling circumstance has moved me so much." The tears were standing in his eyes as he spoke.

I received two visits from him during the day we were in Louisville. He then travelled to Lexington, and we took the steamboat to Cincinnati. We exchanged several letters after this, and I had many evidences that his interest remained unabated; but we

never met again. The next time I visited Louisville, my drawing-room window in the hotel was decked in remembrance of Henry Clay ; for his funeral procession was passing through the streets.

Mr. Davenport and myself had never appeared in Cincinnati. We were engaged to open the Athenæum. The manager had nobly determined to banish from this theatre all the abuses that degrade the drama. The public gave him their hearty coöperation. No inaugural address had been prepared. I was expected to deliver one, and the manager coolly informed me that he presumed, of course, I would write it myself. It wanted but two days of the opening of the theatre, and the address had not only to be composed, but committed to memory. It is a well-known fact, that an author can remember the language of another person with far greater ease than his own. I accomplished my *forced* task, and by an-emphatic delivery made the most of what I had written ; but no applause could compensate me for the nervous miseries incident upon rapid composition, quick study, and the compulsory utterance of one's own consciously crude thoughts. The house was opened under the most propitious auspices. Those were palmy days for the Athenæum. Reëngagement followed reëngagement, and the seats (there were no boxes) were nightly crowded with a class of the community who had never before been seen within the walls of a theatre.

Mr. Davenport became an especial favorite. On the day of his departure he was presented, by the young men of the city, with a gold watch and chain ; the former bearing a complimentary inscription.

This engagement closed my second year upon the ✓

stage — a year as eminently successful, and more replete with happiness than the first. I had gained mental and physical strength; improved in health; become inured to the thousand *desagréments*, the discomforts, the endless vexations, and unavoidable fatigues of the profession; and I had watched the frown of disapproval slowly melting away from faces that I loved, and the benignant of smiles dawning in its place.

Every actress who gains celebrity is tolerably sure of being courted and *fêted*, inundated with poems, complimentary letters, flowers, rich gifts. These things seem to be the inevitable consequences — I might say the *conventional accessories* — of her public position. But if her sorrows have taught her to distinguish tinsel from gold, these hollow evidences of mere popularity can afford little real, little internal satisfaction.

If she has tasted of the tree of *knowledge of the world*, and been gifted with dearly-bought insight into realities, she knows that those who lavish these gifts and bestow these favors are oftener actuated by self-love than by love of her. They bow to the rising star because its effulgence is reflected back upon its votaries.

This is a bitter lesson for prosperity to teach; but, like other bitters, it possesses restorative virtues. It is the wholesome tonic that reinvigorates the spirit which flatteries debilitate.

At the close of this second professional year, Mr. Mowatt sailed for Europe to make arrangements with London managers for our appearance in the English metropolis. I returned to that roof where I was most certain of passing peaceful and happy days — my father's!

During this summer I wrote *Armand*, a five-act

drama. The play was engaged by the manager of the Park Theatre, and a time fixed for its production, before a line had been written. The plot is not strictly historical, but it has some slight historical foundation. The part of Armand was, professionally speaking, *measured* for Mr. Davenport, and suited to his vigorous and impulsive style of acting. Blanche I designed to personate myself.

Every scene, as it was completed, I read aloud to a little circle of feminine critics. They were my sisters, most of whom had been gathered from their scattered homes to greet the one amongst their number who had for two years been a wanderer. Their critical acumen was, of course, tempered by considerable leniency; but the critic's prerogative was not wholly abandoned. Sometimes they savagely condemned a situation, or insisted that a passage should be wholly expunged; and, now and then, they pertinaciously objected to laugh or weep at the expected moment. I generally adopted their suggestions; but, assuming an air of mock dignity, I seldom failed to remind the exulting denunciators that Molière was guided by the opinions of his washer-woman.

Mr. Mowatt consulted with Mr. Macready. Mr. Macready thought it impolitic for my first appearance to be made in London. The provincial theatres, he said, were the seminaries of the London institutions. If an actor obtained decided celebrity in the provinces, he would, as a matter of course, receive advantageous offers from London managers. Mr. Macready proposed that I should play a round of engagements in the English provinces, and wait until my abilities had been fully tested and I had received a summons to London.

Mr. Mowatt was convinced of the wisdom of his advice, and entered into an engagement with Mr. Knowles, manager of the Theatre Royal, Manchester, for the appearance of Mr. Davenport and myself on the 7th of December, 1847.

Armand was completed shortly after Mr. Mowatt's return to this country, and was produced at the Park Theatre September 27, 1847. The Broadway Theatre, then just completed, opened on the same night, and offered a strong counter attraction; yet the new play drew a full audience to the Park. Mr. Davenport's personation of Armand gained him fresh laurels. I was too nervous, and too much tormented with anxieties for the success of the play, to embody the character of Blanche to my own satisfaction. But none could know, as I myself knew, how far my representation fell short of my own creation. The success of *Fashion* had prepared the audience to receive Armand with marked favor. As the curtain dropped upon the fifth act, a heavy weight of doubt and responsibility fell from my heart. Judgment had been passed upon the new candidate for popular approval, and I had cause to rejoice at the verdict.

The play was acted every night until the close of our engagement. Immediately afterwards it was produced in Boston, and received with unequivocal warmth. This Boston engagement was our farewell in America. On the last night — it was my benefit night — the play was Armand, when I appeared upon the stage, and listened to a greeting even more than ordinarily enthusiastic: a multitude of recollections suddenly broke upon me, sweeping away my composure in their strong current. Thoughts of my first public appearance, made



in Boston — of the varied trials since that day of hope and promise — of the new ordeal through which I was about to pass — of the possibility that I might never stand before this well-beloved audience again — crowded upon my mind with bewildering force. It was the first time since I became an actress that any personal emotion had gained sufficient mastery to interfere with my interpretation of the character I represented. Tears are unbecoming at all times. Red and swollen eyes, to say nothing of other disfigurements consequent upon weeping, were particularly inappropriate to the joyous May Queen. Mrs. Maywood, who was playing my nurse, Babette as she encircled me with her arms, intermingled her whispered words of consolation with this womanly hint. There are moments when a performer has a magnetic perception of the pulse throbbings of his audience, and knows that they beat in unison with his own. I felt that there were answering sympathies around me, and was certain that the "red eyes," which my good Babette thought so frightful, would be pardoned.

On the 1st of November, 1847, we sailed from Boston for Liverpool, in the *Cambria*, commanded by Captain Judkins. Mr. Davenport accompanied us. His support had been found so advantageous, during his first year, that he was engaged for a second.

We were, of course, well provided with introductory letters. Henry Clay sent me one to the Earl of Carlisle, and another to the American minister, Mr. Bancroft. They were neither mere formal letters of introduction. In the latter, he makes a graceful allusion to the difference of politics between himself and this gentleman. There were subjects of private interest upon

which he hoped that their opinions would not be at variance. I quote the concluding portion of the letter in which this was enclosed:—

“Many, many thanks for the friendly sentiments towards me contained in your letter. A member of my family snatched Evelyn from me to peruse; and owing to that cause, and for want of time, I have not yet read it. I shall go into it with such partiality for its authoress as to disqualify me as a critic, if otherwise I was, what I happen not to be, a competent judge.

“May honor, fame, pleasure, and riches be your reward in England, with a safe and happy return to our own dear country.”

Just before we sailed I received another letter from Mr. Clay, in which these words occur:—

“I have read, with much delight, the quotations from Armand. Don’t let the duties of the actress engross all your time, but leave a fair portion of it for those of the authoress.

“May God protect, preserve, and prosper you while absent, and bring you back, with increased fame and renown, in safety to our dear country.”

## CHAPTER XV.

*Arrival in Liverpool. — The Rev. Mr. S——n and Mrs. S——n. — Manchester Critics. — First Rehearsal at Theatre Royal, Manchester. — First Night in England. — Manchester Guardian. — Engagement at Princesses' Theatre, London. — Distressing Rehearsals. — The two Helens. — Miss Susan Cushman. — Visitation from the Mistress of the Wardrobe. — Petty Miseries. — The Trials of a first Night. — First Attack of "Stage Fright." — A near Approach to Failure. — Sudden Transition. — Success at the Eleventh Hour.*

A SUCCESSION of violent gales rendered our voyage more than ordinarily perilous. The sight of land gladdened our eyes on the fifteenth day. On arriving in Liverpool, we found that the *Cambria* was reported to have been wrecked off Cape Race. The ship lost was the packet *Stephen Philip*, with ninety-one passengers.

A portion of our engine was broken during the passage, and we lay still seven hours while it was repairing. We met no other accident. The stormy voyage brought vividly to mind the terrible recollections of my childhood — the shipwreck and the loss of my young brother. But I was too thoroughly a victim to *mal de mer* to be susceptible even of fear.

We remained a week in Liverpool, that I might recover from the effects of this oppressive sea malady, and then left for Manchester.

First and firmest amongst the friends we made in a foreign land were the Rev. Mr. S——n and his wife. Mr. S——n had, for many years, been pastor of a New

Church society in Manchester. I pause when I would write of these revered friends, and my mind fills with affectionate and grateful remembrances. I need not here record all the evidences we received of a valuable and energetic friendship. They are registered in a more lasting chronicle, to the pages of which I often turn.

Previous to our *début*, Mrs. S——n entertained undisguised fears that we would receive harsh treatment at the hands of the proverbially caustic Manchester critics. She called upon the most ascetic of the cynical brotherhood, to “smooth the raven down” by interesting him in my history. The experiment was only calculated to render him more uncompromising. In another field she was more successful. Her womanly efforts raised me up an army of defenders amongst the members of her husband’s congregation. They were prepared to support me if I betrayed the faintest glimmering of genius.

Another anxious friend called upon the theatrical critic of the Manchester Guardian, the leading oracle of the press, and offered to present him to me. The cautious and conscientious critic declined the introduction until *after* my *début*, remarking that a personal acquaintance might prepossess him in my favor, and interfere with the justice of his criticism. And of such judges was the tribunal composed before which we were to be sifted, scanned, and tested. In such hands was placed Distinction’s

“Broad and powerful fan,”  
that,

“Puffing at all, winnows the light away.”

If our talents fell short in their “fair proportions” of

some fabulous or imaginary standard, we were to be annihilated by a paragraph — stabbed by thrusts of steel in the form of pens — exterminated by the simoom of a critic's breath. Pleasant auguries, these, to usher in our career in a land of strangers.

The theatre was a remarkably beautiful one. The play selected for our *début* was, as usual, the *Lady of Lyons*. Our only rehearsal took place on the day of performance. We could not but notice the half sneer that flitted across the faces of the English actors during that rehearsal. They were incredulous as to our abilities, and, perhaps, not without some cause. Now and then there was a contemptuous intonation in their voices that seemed to rebuke us for presumption. Their shafts "hit, but hurt not." Our American independence was an ægis, from which the arrows fell without producing any effect but merriment. No hand of welcome was extended — no word of encouragement was spoken to the intruding "Yankees." We were surrounded by an atmosphere of impenetrable fridity. And yet there were, no doubt, kind hearts among the doubters. But the "stars" were transatlantic, and their light was unacknowledged in that hemisphere. Even the subordinates of the theatre gave it as their private opinion that these new luminaries would be extinguished without trouble.

At night, when the curtain rose upon Pauline, the greeting of the audience said plainly, "Let us see what you can do!" and it said nothing more. Claude received the same gracious though promiseless permission. But even that greeting assured us of that downright generous trait in John Bull which makes him the fairest of umpires, even where he is a party to the con-

test. Once make it plain that he is beaten, as in the case of the trial with the New York yacht, and he will huzza for the victor as vociferously as he would have done for himself had he been on the winning side.

Before the fall of the curtain on the fourth act, it was decided that the "stars" were *not* to be "put out." At the fall on the fifth, they had taken an honorable place in the theatrical firmament, and were allowed to shine with undisputed light.

The heartiness of the call before the curtain, at the conclusion of the play, atoned for the shyness of our reception. Mr. Davenport thanked the audience in a speech eloquent with genuine feeling.

And now a marvellous change suddenly took place in the deportment of the actors towards us. There was a "making way" for the successful candidates to public favor — a looking up to instead of the looking down on them. Sneers and innuendoes were magically converted into smiles and congratulations. There were even speculations afloat concerning the "hit" that we would make upon a London stage.

The *débutants* had been as cheerful as could be expected over the distrust and disdain with which they had been treated in the morning; and they were now able to be unaffectedly merry at the equally unlooked-for courtesies lavished upon them at night.

The next morning the critics were unanimous in commendation — with the exception of the Examiner, whom Mrs. S——n had attempted to disarm of his ferocity. But he was harmlessly savage, and reluctantly admitted that the American candidates had gained a foothold in the affections of the English public.

The Guardian — reputed to be the critic of first

importance in Manchester — prefaced his criticism with the following paragraph : —

“MRS. MOWATT AND MR. DAVENPORT, THE AMERICAN ACTORS. — Exaggeration of a peculiar kind, if not rant, has been so uniformly a characteristic of all the American actors whom we have seen, that we have been induced to view it as an attribute of the American stage. That it is not an inseparable attribute, the chastened style of the artists named above, who made their English *début* at our Theatre Royal on Monday evening, in the *Lady of Lyons*, satisfactorily demonstrates.

“Mrs. Mowatt, judging from the accounts of her which the American papers have occasionally furnished, is highly endowed with intellect, the cultivation and exercise of which have by no means been neglected, either in the departments of dramatic or general literature; indeed, in this respect, we know of none of our English actresses who stand a comparison with her except Mrs. Butler. Let us add, that Mrs. Mowatt has a most engaging person, — slight in form, features capable alike of gentle and forcible expression, a voice of silvery sweetness, — and that her bearing is marked by refinement, and then we have said enough to prove that she has qualifications for the stage of a high order.

“Mr. Davenport has a manly person, easy deportment, and an elocution very smooth and agreeable.”

Then follows a long and elaborate critique on the *Lady of Lyons*, the manner in which it is represented by Mr. Macready and Miss Faucit, and finally by ourselves.

We appeared every night for a fortnight. At the close of the engagement, the manager informed us that Mr. Maddox, of the Princesses' Theatre, desired to enter into an arrangement for our appearance in London. This was precisely what we most desired.

A few days after our arrival in the great metropolis all preliminaries were settled, and we engaged to appear at the Princesses' Theatre on the 5th of January, 1848, and to play alternate nights with Madame Thil-

lon for six weeks. I was thus relieved from the necessity of acting every night, and afforded an opportunity for needful rest and even more requisite study.

We selected the *Lady of Lyons*, as on previous occasions, for our opening play. The cost of its production in London was twenty pounds. This sum gave a theatre the right of performance for the whole season. The author demanded the same sum if the play were enacted for a single night. The manager of the Princesses' objected to so expensive a selection. The usual price paid to an author for the representation of a five-act drama is two guineas per night. After manifold discussions and endless canvassing of the merits of various plays, we consented to make our *début* in the *Hunchback* of James Sheridan Knowles.

✓ Our first rehearsal in an English provincial theatre had not proved particularly delightful. But it was a foreshadowing of, and a needful preparation for, the more aggravated, temper-trying inflictions that awaited us at a London rehearsal. The stage aristocrats of the company made no effort to conceal their absolute contempt for the American aspirants.

Figuratively speaking, we were made to walk through a lane of nettles, so narrow that we could not avoid getting scratched. The more gently they were touched, the more deeply they stung. At the request, politely urged, of "Be so good as to cross to the right—I occupy the left"—the answer dryly returned was, "Excuse me; I played this part originally with Mrs. Butler, at Drury Lane—I always kept this position—it is *the proper* situation." Then there was a significant look at the prompter, which said, "This republican dust offends us! We must get rid of it!"



The more mildly Mr. Davenport and myself uttered our unavoidable requests, the more decidedly we were answered with objections to our wishes, founded upon the authority of some mighty precedent. Neither patience nor gentleness could disarm our antagonists. Wearied out with hearing that Mrs. Butler *sat* during her delivery of a certain speech, and, therefore, that nobody else *could* stand — or that Miss Faucit fainted with her head leaning forwards, and, therefore, no Julia could faint with her head inclined backwards — or that Mrs. Kean threw herself at a certain point into the arms of Master Walter, and, therefore, the embrace was a necessity — I at last boldly, and, I confess, with some temper, said, “Sir, when I have made up my mind to become the mere imitator of Mrs. Butler, or of Miss Faucit, or of Mrs. Kean, I shall, perhaps, come to *you* for instruction. At present, it is for the public to decide upon the faultiness of my conception. I shall not alter it, in spite of the very excellent authority you have cited.”

This determined declaration (it was certainly a “declaration of independence”) silenced my principal tormentor. He made up his mind that, if I was wanting in talent, I was not deficient in spirit. He would have bowed before the one, but he at least yielded to the other.

But this was not my only or most serious annoyance. Miss Susan Cushman was to enact the character of Helen. She sent an apology for her absence at rehearsal on the plea of indisposition. The manager chose to imagine that she entertained some theatrical jealousy towards a countrywoman, and purposed to absent herself on the night of our first appearance. No

substitute for so important a part as Helen could be provided at short notice, and the play would necessarily have to be withdrawn—the anticipated *début* postponed.

I see no reason for supposing that Miss Cushman meditated any such unamiable intentions as were attributed to her by the manager. We were very slightly acquainted, but our intercourse had been agreeable.

Miss Cushman's name was unceremoniously expunged from the "cast;" and Miss Emmeline Montague, the leading lady of the theatre, was persuaded by Mr. Maddox to undertake the *rôle* of Helen.

At the last rehearsal, for we had several, just as Miss Montague commenced rehearsing, Miss Susan Cushman walked upon the stage. She inquired by what right the character belonging to her was given to another lady. The manager,\* who was not celebrated for a conciliatory demeanor towards his company, bluntly informed her of his suspicions. An angry scene ensued, such as I never before, and I rejoice to say *never after*, witnessed in any theatre. Rehearsal was interrupted. I sat down at the prompter's table in a most unenviable state of mind. The actors stood in clusters around the wings, enjoying the dispute. Miss Cushman and Mr. Maddox occupied the stage. A casual spectator might have supposed they were rehearsing some tempestuous passages of a melodrama. Miss Cushman declared that she *would* play Helen, for that she had done nothing to forfeit her right to the performance. Mr. Maddox maintained that the part should be played by Miss Montague. Miss Cushman was very naturally exasperated. I remained silent, but internally wishing that the disputants might suddenly disappear through some

of the trap doors that checkered the stage and were devoted to the use of fairies and hobgoblins.

Finally Mr. Maddox ordered that the stage should be cleared and rehearsal continued. Miss Cushman was forced to retire. Just as she reached the wing, she turned back and offered me her hand. I gave her mine — she departed, and rehearsal proceeded. This extraordinary scene in the drama of real life thoroughly unnerved and unfitted me for the business of the hour; and that night I was to make my London *début*!

I had not recovered from the painful excitement when I drove to the theatre in the evening to dress for the performance of Julia. How shall I describe the petty miseries, the mountain of vexation, made up of “unconsidered trifles,” that rendered that night unspeakably wretched? Who does not know how much easier it is to endure a great and actual trial than the pin-pricks of accumulated annoyances?

Shivering with cold, I entered the dreary “star dressing room.” My newly-engaged maid awaited me. She was a quiet, timid, middle-aged woman, and appeared nearly as nervous as myself.

“Is there no fire?” I inquired, with chattering teeth.

“This stove smokes, ma’am; and the ladies complain so much that I was afraid to have it lighted.”

“But I shall freeze while I am dressing!”

The good woman looked distressed, and seemed to think it very likely.

Just at this moment the mistress of the wardrobe entered with some dresses which she had persuaded me to let her alter, that they might be more in accordance with English taste. In a somewhat authoritative tone, she bade the maid light all the gas burners, informing

me that they would sufficiently heat the room. They soon created an unwholesome warmth, which was, however, more endurable than absolute cold.

The mistress of the wardrobe, to my surprise and annoyance, seemed prepared to make herself at home in my comfortless apartment. At all events, it was more than *I* could do. She had belonged to the theatre a number of years, and had complacently passed judgment on all the "stars" whose transitory light had illumined that firmament. Her loquacity nearly deafened me; but she was a personage of too much importance to be coolly requested to leave the room.

I did venture a gentle hint, by remarking, significantly, "I think I must begin to dress soon"—but I was defeated by the quiet tone of acquiescence with which she replied, "I think you must, or you won't be ready."

I thought of Sinbad the sailor, and the old man of the sea upon his shoulders, who could not be shaken off. I began to dress. My unwelcome visitor poured forth one unceasing stream of gossip as she watched me. Now and then she directed or chid the timid maid, but never attempted to assist her. I prepared to arrange my hair.

"Aren't you going to have a hair dresser?" inquired my tormentor, looking aghast at my evident intention of being my own *coiffeur*.

"No. I always dress my own hair!"

"Well, now, let's see what you're going to make of it! What a heap of hair you've got, to be sure!"

A *heap* of hair! I was inclined to be vain of the length and abundance of my hair—I may make the admission now. I looked at her,—I will not describe

in what manner, — but I might as well have looked at the Great Mogul, under the delusion that he would be awed. The “heap of hair” was rapidly divided into a single row of ringlets that fell to the waist.

“You’re not going to leave your hair in that wild fashion?”

“To be sure I am — I constantly wear it so.”

“Good gracious! the audience will *guy* you!”

“*Guy* me?”

“Why, yes — *guy* you — *guy* you! — they will!”

“*Guy* me? What do you mean by *guy*?” I asked, becoming alarmed, in spite of myself, at the unknown horror.

“Why, laugh at you, to be sure — and *chaff* you!”

“*Chaff* me?”

“Yes; clap their hands, as if they thought it was very pretty, and all the time be *guying* you. Don’t you know about the fifth of November — Guy Fawkes’s day — when they carry a *guy* about the streets to make sport of? That’s *guying*!”

This was a novel style of gunpowder plot, and I was standing over the train which my ringlets were to ignite!

I turned from the glass, which reflected a face not very amiable in its expression, and commenced dressing.

“Wait a moment! wait a moment! I have forgotten something!” said my persecutor, and ran out of the room.

She returned in a moment, and handed me a wadded *jupon*, very dexterously made to amplify and round the form.

“I made this for you to wear, for I noticed you

hadn't much more figure than a beanstalk. You look as if a breath of air would blow you away."

It was true that I was, at that period, excessively thin—my weight being less than ninety pounds, although I was slightly above the medium height.

I looked doubtfully at this new and ingenious appliance of the toilet, but was finally persuaded to try its effect. To my own eyes the added breadth gave me a disproportioned appearance, rendering the waist waspish, and the shoulders too narrow. I was assured that it was a great improvement, and made me look less *insignificant*. There was no time for alteration; the "call boy" had tapped at the door, and given the summons, "Julia, you are called." At the same moment, Mr. Mowatt came to conduct me to the entrance, where the Helen of the evening stood waiting.

Helen and Julia enter together. As we advanced from the back of the stage, we were greeted with repeated rounds of applause. But it was reasonable to suppose that one half of the welcome was intended for Miss Montague, a lady who, for her talents and her private virtues, was held in deservedly high esteem.

For the first time I comprehended the full meaning of the mystical words, "stage fright." My *moment de peur* had come at last. The malady had seized me, and in its worst form. With my first attempt to acknowledge the salutation of the audience, I lost

"The ease  
That marks security to please."

I could not force my quivering lips into a smile; when I spoke, I could not hear the sound of my own voice; floating mists were dancing before my eyes; I saw three faces of Helen instead of one. What

was the matter with my feet? When I tried to walk, the tiny links of some invisible chain bound them together. And my limbs — why could not the most resolute effort prevent their tremulous motion? My very hair, as it touched my shoulders, seemed to have a clammy, Medusa-like coil. Mechanically, meaninglessly I uttered the words of the part, and gazed at the *triplicated* Helen with a vacant stare. Not a hand of applause was raised for Julia through that first act — nor through the second — nor through the third — though the author has afforded manifold opportunities of making “points.” I had never before failed, at certain bursts of passion, to elicit the responsiveness of the audience. But I could make no bursts. Like an automaton, I moved inanimately through the part. I seemed to myself gradually sinking on a shoreless sea, in a dead calm, — the sea of public condemnation, — without the power to grasp even at a straw.

The fourth act commenced. Master Walter leads the penitent Julia through the sumptuous halls of her affianced bridegroom’s mansion. A mirror is supposed to be seen in the distance. Master Walter bids Julia look at the reflected image of the mistress, in anticipation, of these splendors. At rehearsal, Master Walter had asked me, as he was in courtesy bound to do, on which side I preferred the imaginary mirror to be situated. I answered, on the left. It is often confusing, even to very old actors, to have the “sides,” on which they have been accustomed to act, unexpectedly changed. Did Master Walter remember this when he deliberately crossed the stage, and pointed me out the mirror on the *right*? I was ungenerous enough to fancy he did.

Master Walter hands Julia a chair, and seats himself beside her. At the words, —

“O happy steed,  
My heart bounds at the thought of thee! Thou comest  
To bear the page from bonds to liberty!” —

Julia springs joyfully from her seat. The action is so natural that it can hardly be avoided. Master Walter had handed me the chair. I sat down. He took another chair, gazed at me mournfully for a moment, then deliberately (but *unconsciously*, I hope) placed it upon my flowing train, and seated himself. To start up at the required moment, without leaving the train behind me, would have been impossible. I endeavored to disengage the folds without interrupting his history of the “princess and page,” but unsuccessfully. I tried to attract his attention to the mishap, but he was rapt in his part. I had no alternative but to utter the required lines without attempting to start up, and to wait patiently until he thought proper to rise and release me.

At the announcement of the Earl’s secretary, Master Walter was forced to make his exit. I was a prisoner no longer. I stood alone upon the stage. The oppressing influences had vanished. The icy spell was suddenly broken. My paralyzing fears melted away. I delivered the soliloquy, commencing, —

“A wedded bride! Is it a dream? is it a phantom?” —

with an impassioned *abandon* that called down a storm of surprised applause. It was the first I had received since I opened my lips. Davenport entered as Clifford. How the scene between Julia and the new secretary was enacted, the plaudits, that came in sudden gusts



from the time it commenced, and the vociferous attempt to call us before the curtain at the close of the fourth act, abundantly testified. I refused to answer the summons, but hastened to my dressing room to assume Julia's bridal attire. I was myself again — or rather, I was once more the character I represented. Had I found the pertinacious visitant in my apartment, I should have dismissed her as unhesitatingly as I threw aside the fictitious embellishment which she compelled me to wear.

If, when I appeared on the stage in the fifth act, the audience remarked that Julia had grown mysteriously slender, they were at liberty to conclude that she had pined away, and become etherealized by her sorrows. How I passed through Julia's stormy scene with Master Walter, the audience told me with unmistakable voices. I was no longer panic-stricken. Master Walter might have led me to the wrong side of the stage, or taken prisoner my train — he could not now have disconcerted me. I had passed out of the narrow limit to which an actor's malice could reach. Half an hour before, I had stood upon the very brink of failure. By a sudden transition of feeling within myself, a similar revulsion had been produced upon the audience, and their verdict was reversed. That verdict we received at the close of the fifth act, in front of the curtain. The "call" had never before imparted to me a sensation of such intense pleasure. I needed this marked assurance that I had removed the impression made by my apathetic acting through three weary acts of the play.

Mr. Davenport escaped the annoyances to which I had been subjected. The part of Clifford is not one in

which he could exhibit the extent of his talents ; but his fine person, manly bearing, and quietly earnest acting won ready favor.

It was six months before I wholly recovered from the mental effects of that first night upon a London stage.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*London Editors.* — *The Daily Times and the Earl of Carlisle.* — *Mr. Macready.* — *Personal Acquaintance and friendly Services.* — *First Engagement at Theatre Royal Olympic.* — *Lady of Lyons.* — *Reengagement in Conjunction with Mr. Brooke.* — *The Lords of Ellingham.* — *Accident on first Night's Representation.* — *Mary Howitt.* — *Her Artist Daughter.* — *Camilla Crosland.* — *Poem.* — *Mr. Macready's Farewell at Theatre Royal, Marylebone.* — *Our Engagement.* — *Succession of Reengagements.* — *Permanent Stars.* — "*Shadow on the Wall.*" — *Armand produced in London.* — *Note from W. J. Fox, M. P., on the Morning of Representation.* — *His Critique in the Examiner.* — *Publication of Play.* — *Effect of Play Books in the Theatre upon Actors.* — *A Prompter's Anecdote.* — *Presentation of Silver Vase.* — *The Witch Wife.*

No ordeal could be severer than the one through which we passed on that first night in London. Amongst the audience, there were not a dozen persons whose hands had ever clasped ours in friendly greeting. Even the few to whom we were personally known had been strangers a week before. Amongst the members of the press and the *habitués* of the theatre, who play the critic with a faultfinding passion, — for

"A man must serve his time to every trade  
Save censure — critics all are ready made," —

we had not a single acquaintance. Consequently, we were not prepared for the flattering estimate of our abilities which appeared in the public journals on the morning after our *début*.

The Hunchback was repeated for our second appear-

ance. On this occasion the performance was not marred by the demoniacal possession of the spirit of "stage-fright."

Benedick and Beatrice were our next impersonations. I quote one of the notices which met our well-pleased eyes on the ensuing morning :—

"The great test of a true dramatic artiste is Shakspeare. Many an actor or actress who has acquired a fair portion of fame in the ordinary run of characters fails in the attempt to imbody the creations of Shakspeare ; whereas, on the contrary, the artiste who can act Shakspeare can act any thing else with ease and success. Mrs. Mowatt was last night tried by the Shakspearian test, and was not found wanting. She is an artiste — there is no mistake about it. She has the ring of the genuine metal — she can act Shakspeare ! The play was *Much Ado about Nothing*, and Mrs. Mowatt sustained the part of Beatrice. She looked charmingly, and thoroughly entered into the spirit of her part. Nothing could exceed the playful *espiègleirie* with which she bantered Benedick, and the thorough *gusto* with which she gave the repartees. Her ringing, tinkling laugh, too, was fascinating, exceedingly — it was the laugh of genuine enjoyment. In the more serious scenes, too, — although, perhaps, she exhibited here and there a tendency to overacting, which appears to be the great fault of the American school of tragedy, — she was very fine. 'One touch of feeling makes the whole world kin ;' and who, that witnessed her indignant denunciations of the wrongers of Hero, did not feel the truth of the line ? The *forte* of Mrs. Mowatt is evidently high comedy. Her Beatrice is a proof of it ; her success was complete. She was well supported by Mr. Davenport, whose Benedick, albeit perhaps scarcely sufficiently rollicking in the earlier scenes, was a well-studied, gentlemanly line of acting."

But while all the London papers bestowed elaborate criticism, the oracular *Daily Times*, which leads the editorial van, preserved an ominous silence. Its columns wholly ignored our too republican existence.

I do not mean to convey the impression that the press, with this exception, were unanimous in their commendations. The *Morning Post* could barely tol-

erate the American *débutants*. Its praises were of a killing faintness — its censures bombastically loud.

The Athenæum, at the outset of our career, had an odd but caressing mode of chiding — wrapping all its bitters up in sugar plums. I was pronounced “pleasant, but wrong;” designated as “a rose without a thorn,” “a bee without a sting,” and charged with a “honey-dew” insipidity. I presume that in time the wished-for thorns sprouted from the rose stem, — the unobtruded sting gave some evidence of existence, — for, before I left London, the Athenæum became one of our warmest advocates.

The Examiner, usually an austere critic, bestowed upon us high encomiums until the production of *Fashion*. Then, upon my offending head, it poured innumerable vials of wrath. The American nation, it indignantly declared, “had crowned their countrywoman with honor for a production which would have subjected Mrs. Trollope to the penalty of tar and feathers”!

Our engagement of six weeks came to a close. On the morning after my benefit — our last night — the portentous silence of the *Daily Times* was unexpectedly broken. It suddenly discovered that two American performers were actually fulfilling a successful engagement at the Princesses’ Theatre, and condescendingly honored them with a laudatory notice. Henceforth our performances were regularly chronicled in its columns. The mysterious waking up for a time remained as incomprehensible to us as the long slumber.

At a dinner party given by Mr. Macready, we became acquainted with Mr. Oxenford, the theatrical critic of this influential journal. A species of half

friendship sprang out of the introduction, and lasted several years. Mr. Oxenford said to me one day, "Would you like to know how the *Daily Times* chanced to notice you after giving you the *go-by* through your first engagement?"

I replied, that there were few subjects upon which my curiosity had been so much excited; consequently, the information would be particularly interesting.

"You are indebted to a friend," he answered.

"To what friend?"

"To the Earl of Carlisle."

Mr. Oxenford then told me that he had always lacked faith in America's ability to produce theatrical genius of high order — making Miss Cushman an exception to this sweeping scepticism. When he heard of the new American artists in England, he thought it "too great a bore" to go and see them. A note from the Earl of Carlisle induced him to visit the theatre on my benefit night. The contents of this note he did not repeat, but I presume it requested for us an impartial criticism. Henry Clay's letter to the Earl of Carlisle, with one of my own, were, I believe, enclosed in the earl's missive to the editor of the *Times*. It was, then, to our own beloved and distinguished countryman — not wholly to a foreign nobleman — that we owed our indebtedness for this important service.

Our engagement at the Princesses' was to be followed by the appearance of Mr. Macready. A proposition was made to us by Mr. Henry Wallack, stage manager, that we should consent to a reëngagement, and act in conjunction with Mr. Macready in the plays which he produced. This arrangement would have afforded me invaluable opportunities of improvement in

my vocation. But my personations had been confined to the Juliets, Rosalinds, Desdemonas. Mr. Macready required the support of a Lady Macbeth, Queen Constance, Queen Katharine. These were impediments which I had not the temerity to attempt—at least not until I had devoted to them the study of months, or rather years. I was obliged reluctantly to forego the proposed distinction. Mrs. Kemble filled the place for which I, confessedly, had not the indispensable qualifications.

Our personal acquaintance with Mr. Macready was the source of mingled gratification and advantage. A dinner was given at his house for the express purpose of making us acquainted with persons of literary, editorial, and social influence. Nor was this the only means by which he generously endeavored to promote our professional interest.

Our second engagement in London took place at the Olympic Theatre Royal. Mr. Davidson was the nominal manager. The name of the actual lessee and manager, a gentleman of family and high literary standing, was withheld from the public.

Mr. Brooke had just made his triumphant London *début* at this theatre. During his temporary absence in the provinces we appeared in the *Lady of Lyons*, the manager of the Olympic not finding the author's demand so exorbitant as it was deemed by the manager of the *Princesses*'. But the former was a dramatist himself. The play was repeated six successive nights. Shortly after Mr. Brooke's return we reëngaged, and appeared in the same plays, Mr. Davenport and Mr. Brooke sustaining characters of equal importance.

This combination took place for the first representa-

tion of a tragedy in five acts, by Henry Spicer, Esq., author of *Judge Jeffreys, Honesty, &c.*, entitled the *Lords of Ellingham*. The production of that play formed the principal feature of our engagement. - Mr. Davenport's portrayal of the confiding, noble-minded Dudley Latymer won him much applause. Mr. Brooke rendered the audacious villany of Laurency almost dangerously captivating.

The death of Edith, in the last act, ends a highly-wrought scene, full of thrillingly effective situations. I forgot the wisdom of *reserved* strength on the first night, and made too lavish an expenditure. In attempting to reach my dressing room immediately after "the death," I fell from exhaustion, and, striking a sharp corner, cut a deep gash near the left temple. Fortunately, the flow of blood restored me to consciousness. The first sound I heard on recovering was the call boy's summons of "Edith, you are called." In the closing scene of the play Edith is brought in on her bier, to strike horror to the heart of her remorseless persecutor. The bier could not be carried empty upon the stage, for, at a certain point, it is necessary that a veil should be lifted, and Edith's face disclosed. The manager, hearing of my accident, was very anxious to procure a substitute; but there was no time, and the discovery of a change by the audience would have endangered the effectiveness of the last act, and perhaps the success of the play.

My head was hastily bound up, and I was laid upon the bier. The ghastliness of countenance produced by the accident was particularly appropriate to the (to me) solemn occasion. But when Dudley lifted the veil, and beheld the bandaged head and the crimson drops that



still trickled amongst Edith's hair, he uttered an involuntary exclamation of horror not set down "i" the book." The departed spirit of Edith must have returned at the sound, for she whispered reassuringly through half-opened lips, "It's nothing — I'm not much hurt!"

The accident did not prevent my responding to the call of the audience when the play ended, though with bandaged brows; nor did it preclude my appearance in the same character on the ensuing night, in spite of an unbecoming wound, that could not be concealed by the most ingenious arrangement of curls. But this accident is a trifle to those which occur every day in the profession. There are instances of men's continuing a performance on the stage after they have had a finger or thumb accidentally shot off. The putting out of an eye, or the breaking of a limb, might possibly be considered disabling; but minor calamities would be looked upon as too trivial to frustrate the enjoyment of a despotic audience.

Our engagement at the Olympic continued until the close of the theatre for the summer vacation.

The *entourage* of friendships will render any locality a *home*. The most genial of social surroundings soon made us cease to feel like strangers in London. Hillard, in his exquisite book on Italy, remarks, "It is well to be chary of names. It is an ungrateful return for hospitable attentions to print the conversation of your host," &c., &c. The temptation to disregard this admonition is great in proportion to the wisdom of the rule from which it emanates. I have endeavored, in spite of some natural inclinations to the contrary, to adhere to the precept, except when the names of parties men-

tioned were in some way associated with my own history. In this connection I may speak of Mary and William Howitt. Their names had been familiar words from childhood. What a moment of delight I thought it, when I could exchange my imperfect, imaginary portraits of these celebrities for as charming realities! We first met at a literary *soirée*. I knew that Mary Howitt was present. As my eyes glanced round the room in search of her, they rested upon a lady whose almost Quaker-like simplicity of garb, blandly serene countenance, and earnest manner in conversation, made me exclaim, internally, "That must be Mary Howitt!" A few minutes afterwards, when we were presented to each other, I found that I was not mistaken.

Her personal acquaintance with members of the dramatic profession had awakened an interest in the stage. But in what subject, affecting human welfare, does not Mary Howitt take a ready interest? Out of what unpretending ore would not the alchemy of her philanthropic mind strike a vein of gold? Our accidental introduction ripened into an attachment—at least on my side. We were constantly thrown into communication; and Mary Howitt's visits, generally extended to some hours, ushered in my "*white days*." She proposed to add mine to the collection of memoirs that had already flowed from her graphic pen, and desired us to furnish her with materials. In compliance with this request, my early history was related, principally by Mr. Mowatt. The memoir, which she used to pronounce "a labor of love," was published in the *People's Journal*. William and Mary Howitt were at that time the editors.

Our intercourse with Mary Howitt was greatly enhanced by the society of her gentle, artist daughter,

Anna Mary Howitt. She had not then contributed to the literary world her entertaining book, entitled, *The Art Student in Munich*. It might truly be said of this lovely girl, —

“The dispositions she inherits  
Which render fair gifts fairer.”

She at once resembled and differed from her mother in character. Her philanthropy was as large, but more discriminating. Her energies were more concentrated. Her perceptions of the beautiful and true (are they not identical?) were even quicker. Her friendships were built upon rocks — those of her mother had now and then a hasty foundation in sand. Who, that has once known this youthful artist authoress, can forget the peculiar fascination of her dove-like ways — the frank simplicity which impressed one with a sense of reserved power to be used at need — the modest sensitiveness that shrank from display — the apparent unconsciousness of her own rich gifts? She always reminded me of Wordsworth's description of that Lucy who “dwelt alone beside the banks of Dove” — although, in one respect, she differed — there *were* many to praise her, and many to love.

Another friendship, highly prized and warmly responded to, and leaned upon with a loving confidence in its lasting strength, was that of a friend of the Howitts, Camilla Crosland, — *née* Camilla Toulmin, — celebrated as a novelist, poetess, editress.

Mrs. Crosland addressed to me the following poem, one of the most valued of the effusions to which my name has been attached. My prospective return to America had formed the principal subject of our conversation.

## TO ANNA CORA MOWATT.

Blow, western wind, athwart the wave,—  
Blow, western breezes, still,—  
And hold at bay the envious bark,  
That seeks its sail to fill,  
Whene'er the threatened day arrives  
(We dream of it with pain)  
That calls the bird of passage home,  
Across th' Atlantic main.

A bird — a pearl — a "lily" \* flower !  
We love to liken thee  
To something fresh from Nature's hand  
In mystic purity.  
And Protean should be types, I ween,  
Of thee, O richly gifted !  
By triple rights and triple crowns  
Above the herd uplifted.

Thy perfect beauty not the theme  
On which to fondly warm ;  
For common clay has ta'en, ere now,  
The Spartan Helen's form.  
And yet that beauty had a spell  
Which unto awe could reach,  
When first I clasped thy hand, and heard  
The music of thy speech.

It stayed the words upon my tongue,  
My foot upon the floor ;  
I could but gaze as I, methinks,  
Had never gazed before.  
We were not strangers — O, no, no !  
And cordial was thy clasp ;  
And yet, *that awe* well nigh forbade  
My hand return the grasp.

I knew thee by a knowledge deep —  
That of thy printed page ;

\* In allusion to the pet name by which I had for some years been called by relatives and friends. The English press had also, on several occasions, used the designation of the " American lily."

But not as yet had I beheld  
Thy triumphs of the stage.  
Thy Blanche was still a hearsay thing,  
Thy Pauline but a dream ;  
And Shakspeare's women dwelt apart,  
And not in life might seem.

Far from conventional, cold rules,  
That tell of paint and glare,  
And all the playhouse tricks of trade,  
And player's studied care,  
Thy poet soul can mould and bring  
The poet's thought to life,  
As when Italian Juliet loves,  
And dies a hapless wife ; —

Or chaste Virginia, tyrant-doomed,  
Amid her household gods,  
Most desolate, yet undismayed,  
By Roman licitor's rods !  
To goodness, greatness, love, and faith,  
Thy heart responsive bends ;  
Thy *woman's nature* is the spell  
That with thy genius blends, —

The spell that binds our hearts to thee  
With chains more strong than steel,  
And girds thee round with British love,  
And friends both warm and leal,  
Who bid the western breeze to blow  
Athwart the Atlantic main,  
And envy thy broad land the right  
To lure thee back again.

Five years have added their daily strength to the bond of affection that links Camilla Crosland with all my most cherished English associations. Her name has ever a harp-like sound in my ears, and brings back her own tones, —

“ A voice of holy sweetness, turning common words to grace.”

There are high arguments in her life to disprove the

supposed incompatibility of literary pursuits with home avocations — more emphatically womanly. These are manifested in the smiling patience with which she has encountered “a sea of trials,” whose tide but ebbed to flow again; the simple dignity with which she receives the homage due to her talents; the “gracious household ways” that render beautiful her domestic existence. But I may not linger upon this theme, though it is one fraught with so many holy and touching memories.

At the Theatre Royal, Marylebone, Mr. Macready played his London farewell previous to his departure for America. The engagement was one of the most brilliant on record. Mrs. Warner occupied the managerial chair at this theatre for several seasons. Her untiring exertions and Mr. Macready’s advent drew a high class of audiences to the Marylebone. The theatre is situated at the “West End” of London. Other stars of note succeeded Mr. Macready and Mrs. Warner, and the audience which they first attracted became permanent.

An advantageous offer was made to us by the Marylebone management and accepted. We opened in *As You Like It*. Our engagement of twelve nights was followed by a reëngagement of twelve more, and immediately after by a third engagement. We became established favorites with the audience, and a proposition was made for us to become the permanent “stars” of the establishment for the next five months, appearing every night.

I ought to mention that the most eminent London stars eschew the comet-like course adopted in the United States. If their attraction is considered sufficiently strong, they engage for the season. Mr. and Mrs.

Kean were at this period the fixed stars of the Hay-market Theatre.

The one hundred and twenty odd nights which were now to be occupied in the same locality demanded a supply of new parts. In two or three instances, the choice of plays was left to the management. I — not possessing Mr. Davenport's remarkable versatility, which enabled him to embody with equal ease an Othello or a Yankee, a cardinal or a sailor — was, consequently, the sufferer.

On one occasion the manager selected a drama by Serle, entitled the Shadow upon the Wall. The character of the heroine had been very successfully represented by Mrs. Keeley; but it was as much out of my range as Lady Macbeth would be out of hers. I endeavored in vain to idealize the cottage Cicely; I liked to deal with subtleties in my delineations, and the breadth of melodrama eluded my reach. At one climax of the play, Cicely, wandering through a deep glen, beholds the shadow of the murderer on a ruined wall. With a loud shriek she stands — that is to say, *it is her duty* to stand — transfixed in an attitude of horror. I was too nearsighted to distinguish the shadow, and could not be certain when it appeared, for I occupied the stage alone. A person was stationed behind the scenes, near one of the entrances, to apprise me in a whisper when the shadow “came on;” but not being wrought up to the requisite pitch of terror by the announcement in a gentle whisper that it was time to be frightened, the only scream I could execute was a very dubious exclamation, that probably indicated nothing more distressing than a sudden pinch. The “attitude of horror” was an equally tame and amiable expression

of alarm. The "shadow scene" consequently lost all its effect, though I am told that it was particularly startling when Mrs. Keeley enacted Cicely.

I found, while studying the character, that it was not one in which I was likely to advance my dramatic reputation. It occurred to me to "write in" a few speeches which I could render telling by their delivery. As I hoped, they drew down the plaudits of the audience, who were ignorant of the interpolations. I was congratulating myself, at the conclusion of the play, upon the dexterous (as I thought) introductions, when, to my surprise and confusion, I was informed that the author was in the theatre, and desired to be presented to me. He had witnessed the performance; had heard the trashy lines that I had passed off as his; and probably, in his heart, meditated some condign punishment for my presumption. I would have done any thing reasonable or unreasonable to avoid the introduction; but there was no escape. When the offended dramatist was brought behind the scenes, his frigid bearing, and stern, rebuking countenance did not tend to reëstablish my self-possession. He looked as though he longed to say, "Where did you get those fine claptrap speeches with which you have thought fit to interlard my play?" and I wanted to answer, in a penitential tone, "Pardon what I have spoke!" &c. But we were neither of us standing in Madame de Genlis's Palace of Truth, and we could only *guess* at each other's thoughts. In that faculty my transatlantic origin gave me the advantage. I read such unqualified condemnations in his mind that I never after ventured to utter more than was "set down" by the author.

In spite of my shortcomings as Cicely, the play



was rendered sufficiently attractive, by Mr. Davenport's thrilling personation of Luke, to be repeated several times. The critics courteously ignored my failure; but that did not render the mortification less poignant to myself.

When the season was at its height, Armand was placed in rehearsal. It had first been perused and canvassed by four distinguished London critics. They were authors themselves, and three of them dramatic authors. The play was revised by one of their number; or rather, it was marked abundantly for my revision. A speech was pointed out which bears strong resemblance to a passage in Byron's *Sardanapalus*. The imitation was an unintentional one. I proposed expunging the lines entirely, but was overruled by the judgment of my critics. I next attempted to alter them; but the amendment was not approved. They finally decided that the passage should stand undefended as it was originally written.

The play was put upon the stage after many laborious rehearsals. The scenery and stage appointments were all of the most costly character. The "cast" was unexceptionable. All the actors lent their hearty coöperation. The play could only fail through its own intrinsic want of merit.

I pass over the days of nervous unrest, of feverish anxiety, during its preparation. For an American, and a woman, to aim at double distinction, as actress and dramatist, before a London tribunal, was, *to say the least*, a bold experiment.

On the morning of the representation, my flagging spirits were suddenly raised by a note from a gentleman distinguished as a divine a man of letters, and member of

Parliament, Mr. W. J. Fox. It accompanied the manuscript of *Armand*, which he had requested the privilege of reading. The note contained these words:—

DEAR MRS. MOWATT.

Thanks for the sight of this. "'Tis not in mortals to command success," but you have assuredly deserved it.

Yours, sincerely,

W. J. FOX.

Many a time that day was this precious little document reperused; and if I read it with glistening eyes and a swelling heart, was not the weakness a pardonable one?

*Armand* was produced at the Theatre Royal, Marylebone, January 18, 1849. The theatre was crammed from pit to dome. The faces of well-known London literati were conspicuously scattered about the house. As soon as the curtain rose, this intelligence was brought to my dressing room. But for the note of Mr. Fox, I should probably have had another attack of "stage fright," and, by that fatal panic, insured the failure of the play. To be told from such a source that I had "*deserved* success," sustained and inspired me.

At the close of the second act, the actors, who had assembled in a body around the wings to witness the representation, assured me that "the play was safe; the audience were in such a capital humor, and so *attentive*." To rivet the attention of an audience is always a gigantic step towards success; for

\* The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark  
When neither is attended."

With what a thrill of delight I watched the green

curtain fall upon the fifth act! After I once began to feel my full responsibilities as an artist, the nightly descent of this welcome green curtain became one of the ecstatic moments of my existence. It always gave me the delicious sense

“Of trial past, of duty done!”

and brought the calm of well-earned repose.

At our summons before the curtain, when we were told in cheers that the double victory had been achieved, Mr. Davenport led me through a perfect parterre of scattered flowers and garlands. Amongst them I recognized a delicate wreath, of classic form, made of fresh ivy leaves. I knew that it had been woven by no hand save that of Mary Howitt's artist daughter. It was her own favorite headdress in society. To many another floral band and bouquet were attached the names of ever-to-be-remembered London friends.

Reviews of the play, with extracts, appeared the next morning in almost every journal in London. Their tenor may be inferred from the fact that twenty-two of these notices were reprinted upon the ample play bills during the run of the play. The Daily Times gave a long and complimentary notice, with extracts. The notice in the Examiner was written by W. J. Fox, M. P.; and this I quote, on account of the high source from which it emanated:—

“MARYLEBONE THEATRE. — On Thursday night, a new play, by Mrs. Mowatt, the American actress, was produced at this theatre, with complete and triumphant success. It is entitled *Armand, or the Peer and the Peasant*, and the contrast intimated in the second title is wrought out very effectively by scenes and characters displaying the best side of rural life, and the profligate manners of the court of Louis XV. These uncongenial elements are skilfully

blended by a plot which makes Blanche, the village May Queen, the unacknowledged daughter of Duke de Richelieu, and the peasant Armand her successful lover, notwithstanding the disparity of birth, and the difficulties interposed by the passion of the monarch himself.

“The incidents by which this is accomplished have less of novelty in themselves than in their combination; and they are adapted to the author’s purpose with great felicity. We have to overlook some few anachronisms, both social and moral; for the rapid advancement of Armand to high rank in the army, and the tone of thought and sentiment ascribed both to him and Blanche, properly belong to a post revolutionary period in French history. Still, their juxtaposition with the corruptions of the monarchy is so happily rendered subservient to the poetical unity of the drama as to silence criticism.

“The result is a play of lively, intense, and continuous interest, which is more easily characterized than described. A profound philosophy of human nature, the terrific war of stormiest passion, and the magnificent bursts of poetry may not be there. Indeed, where are they, save in the few greatest masters of dramatic magic? But we have, instead, living and suggestive outlines of character, scenes of pathos whose power is testified by the emotions of the audience, and a pervading simplicity, truth, and loveliness, both of thought and language, which act as a charm, and are full of fascination. This it is which leaves the most distinct and abiding impression. Over the whole, though dangerous themes have sometimes to be dealt with, there is an air of purity, refinement, and tenderness. The most religious parent might take his child to such a play. And yet the common craving for theatrical excitement runs no risk of being ungratified.

“Mrs. Mowatt is too little known to London playgoers for it to be generally understood how completely she would be identified with her own heroine. In the simplicity, sweetness, earnestness, the meek endurance, the moral energy, the devoted love, there seems no acting, but the direct and spontaneous expression of individual character. There is freshness, beauty, and reality, which the most elaborate art cannot rival. We hope that the charm of this personation, together with the rare fact of success, both as actress and authoress, may lead to better opportunities than have yet occurred for Mrs. Mowatt’s winning a just appreciation of her merits from metropolitan audiences.

“Mr. Davenport rendered able support to the piece as Armand, the artisan. He maintained a frank, manly bearing, without degenerating into insolence; and, to our perceptions, without that

transatlantic exaggeration which haunts the imagination of some of our critics, who might find the reality nearer home. All the actors and actresses engaged appeared to exert themselves as heartily as it proved successfully for the general effect. And Miss Villars deserves especial notice for her lively delineation of an affected page of the old *régime*. The play was well got up, and some of the scenery was highly creditable. The authoress, at the conclusion, was almost smothered with bouquets and wreaths, and the repetition of the play every evening was announced with acclamations."

Armand was enacted twenty-one nights. The title of the play in America had been Armand, or the Child of the People. This second title could not obtain a license in London, and was changed to the Peer and the Peasant. Various passages, which had been pronounced upon the stage in New York and Boston, were expunged by the English licenser, on account of their anti-monarchical tendency. They were necessarily omitted in London. Some of them were afterwards restored before a Dublin audience, and met with a most uproarious response. Armand was published in London immediately after its first representation. The copies nightly sold at the door of the theatre caused great annoyance to the dramatic representatives of the play. It is a singular fact, that if the eye of an actor chances to rest upon an individual in the boxes who is deeply absorbed in a book, and if the actor fancies that book is of the play then performing, he will almost invariably forget his part, though he may have enacted it correctly dozens of times. Sometimes the mere leaf-turning of books in the hands of the audience will throw a whole company into confusion, and the prompter's voice may be heard vainly attempting to plead the cause of the author.

As soon as I discovered this professional peculiarity,

I endeavored to stop the sale of Armand, but unsuccessfully, as the English copyright had been sold.

An American prompter told me that one night a company to which he was attached were acting a comedy which had been hastily put upon the stage. The actors were tolerably perfect in their parts. But it chanced that an old gentleman sat in the stage box, with spectacles on nose, poring over a book, evidently intent upon following the play. The sight of this studious individual disconcerted them so much that, in theatrical parlance, several "stuck dead" in the few first scenes. The prompter, after making vain efforts to unravel the entangled dialogue, thought of a stratagem to rid the actors of the confusing presence. He knocked at the door of the stage box, and, after many apologies, informed the venerable gentleman within that the prompt book had accidentally been lost, and it was feared the performance could not continue, unless, indeed, he kindly loaned the manager his book.

The book was instantly yielded up. The treacherous memories of the company suddenly became faithful, and the play proceeded and ended without further interruption.

Armand was reproduced before the close of the season, and I was offered a benefit, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the purchase of a silver vase in commemoration of the London success of the American production. Every seat was engaged long before the appointed night. The largest amount that the theatre would hold when densely crowded being ascertained, the vase was purchased in advance. The presentation took place on the night of the benefit, and greatly added to the *éclat* of the occasion.

It is a magnificent vase of silver, lined with gold, surmounted by a statuette of Shakspeare. The dedication engraved upon one side of the vase states that it is presented "to Anna Cora Mowatt, for her services to the drama as authoress and actress, and as a record that worth and genius from every land will ever be honored in England."

The opposite side is inscribed with the following lines from *Measure for Measure* :—

"In her youth  
There is a prone and speechless dialect  
Such as moves men; besides, she has prosperous art  
When she would play with reason and discourse;  
And well she can persuade."

The season at the Marylebone closed this year with the production of the *Witch Wife*, a drama in five acts, by Henry Spicer, Esq. It was successfully represented. Mr. Davenport and myself enacted the leading characters. The published play is prefaced by a complimentary dedication to the personator of the heroine.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Travelling. — Stratford upon Avon. — An Avon Boatman's Ideas of Shakspeare. — Housekeeper of Warwick Castle, and Mrs. Siddons. — Isle of Wight. — Cottage at Richmond. — Vigorous Health. — Reopening of the Marylebone. — A Fairy-like Dressing Room. — Velasco. — Virginia. — Romeo and Juliet. — Close of the Season. — Entertainment upon the Stage. — A Ballet Girl nearly burned to Death. — Mrs. Renshaw's Presence of Mind and Heroism. — General Opinion of Ballet Girls. — A few Truths concerning the Profession. — History of Georgina, the Ballet Girl.*

A PORTION of the summer theatrical vacation was passed in travelling. Our first visit was to the birth-place of the great prince of dramatists, whose transcendent genius of itself consecrates the stage. During one of our drives through Stratford our carriage chanced to be filled with water lilies, just gathered at Victoria Spa. By a sudden impulse they were woven by me into a wreath, and flung at Shakspeare's door. The old woman who has charge of the house spied the snowy token, and carried it to the room which is exhibited as the one in which Shakspeare was born.

At Ann Hathaway's cottage we drank from that well of most pellucid water beside which she and her inspired poet-lover may often have stood.

The sunny portion of one day was spent in rowing on the Avon. The stream bore no white water lilies on its bosom, but was profusely gemmed with a flower of cerulean blue, resembling the hyacinth. A few of



these were gathered as mementoes. We were amused with our boatman's garrulity. His ideas of Shakspeare were irreverent to a degree that turned indignation into mirth. He said he believed that some man of the name of Shakspeare *did* live in that butcher's shop; but, as far as he could find out, the man didn't differ particularly from other folks. As for the trash that was shown strangers as having belonged to Mr. Shakspeare, it had all been bought up at sales of old furniture — he knew *that* for a fact. When he discovered that we were Americans, he asked many questions concerning the far-off El Dorado, and ended with, "Well, I should like to go to America once; and my wife says she has no objection to go, if she can come home at night to sleep."

At Charlecote we passed several hours; several more amongst the grass-grown ruins of Kenilworth Castle; and the rest of the day at Guy's Cliff and Warwick Castle. A beautiful portrait of Mrs. Siddons was pointed out to us at the latter place by the housekeeper, who assured us that Mrs. Siddons had resided in that very castle in the capacity of lady's maid. An expression of incredulity from one of our party quite incensed the narrator. Her fertile imagination furnished us a marvellous sketch of the early life of the Queen of Tragedy. The biographer who complained that her history lacked incident might have found an *embarras de richesses* with such a treasury. The genuineness of the materials, and that of the Shakspearian curiosities, would probably have weighed alike in the balance of truth.

At the Isle of Wight — the Eden of England — we passed several weeks of enchantment. The circuit of

the island was made in daily jaunts. During these excursions, our memories were richly stored with pictures of varied loveliness. Through gradual transitions, the scenic beauty of the island glides from the wildly sublime to the softly beautiful.

The rest of the summer flew merrily by at a pretty furnished cottage, hired for the season, in Richmond. How charming I thought that little cottage, with its porch and windows draped with jasmine vines! Now and then the wind would loosen festoons of the starry flowers and blow them into the window, as if inviting us to pluck them. Their fragrance circled the cottage with a perfumed zone.

Every moonlight evening we rowed upon the Thames, passing Pope's Villa and other memorable localities. And every sunshiny day found us wandering through the exquisite Kew Gardens, or the magnificent grounds of Hampton Court, or beside the romantic "Virginia Water," or wherever Nature and Art clasped hands in picturesque union within our reach.

During this summer, for the first time in my life, I comprehended the delightful interpretation of the words "perfect health." What the poet meant to convey by the "fresh, joyous sense of being," was a new revelation to me. The English climate seemed to have endowed me with an elasticity and strength which defied fatigue. The distance I could walk became problematical. I could undergo any amount of hill climbing, or wagon jolting, or horseback galloping. The "fragile form," so often a subject of pitying regret to my English friends, — and which the mistress of the wardrobe, on the evening of my London *début*, had aptly likened to a "bean stalk," — now rounded into robustness. My

mind and spirits sympathetically partook of the vigor that animated my frame. This summer seemed to me like a Sabbath rest after the labor, exhaustion, trials of the six working days appointed for toil. Strange that no prophetic voice within whispered that such halcyon calm might precede life's heaviest storms! No warning angel cried, —

“O joyful heart, exult not so!  
Mistrust that prospect fair;  
It is the lure of death and woe,  
The ambush of despair;” \* —

or if he did, the voice could not reach my clay-clouded senses.

Our engagement at the Marylebone Theatre had been renewed for another year. After that we proposed to return to America. Our new contract stipulated that I should only appear four nights in the week.

The Olympic Theatre had been destroyed by fire, and was rebuilding. The lessee and manager of the Marylebone had also become its lessee. The new edifice was to be completed by Christmas. We were to appear at the Marylebone from September until December — then open the new Olympic, and remain there until the close of the season.

While Mr. Mowatt was discussing with the manager the terms of the engagement, I expressed my surprise at the total disregard of all managers for the private comfort of the unfortunate beings yclept “stars.” I fancy I made some rather satirical comments upon the style of dressing rooms in which I had spent the larger portion of so many evenings for the last few years. I

\* From Epes Sargent's “Songs of the Sea, and other Poems.”

amused myself with giving a burlesque description of some of the under-ground cells and attic corners which I had been forced to occupy, while being arrayed in the purple and gold of royalty — butterfly splendors compressed into the narrowest of chrysalis shells.

The manager, supposing that I rebelled at these discomforts as much as I ironically pretended, made answer, "If you conclude to remain next season, the theatre shall boast of a 'star dressing room' such as never before was seen."

I answered, laughingly, "I suppose you will send some profile stage properties to my room, and ask me to be as good natured as the audience, and believe them to *be* what they *seem* — accepting them at theatrical valuation!"

We removed to London for the opening of the theatre early in September. I was not to act on the first night, but had consented to appear upon the stage during the singing of "God save the Queen." This anthem is always sung by the whole company at the opening of every English theatre.

The chamber appropriated to the use of the star was a small apartment partitioned off from the greenroom. The greenroom is the theatrical drawing room, where the company assemble during the play, and where their "call" for the stage is made. It is very seldom frequented by "stars." They generally retire from the stage to their own rooms.

The apartment to which I was conducted on reaching the theatre had undergone a transformation worthy of Aladdin's lamp. The carpet was of roses on a bed of moss — the paper on the walls represented panels formed of the loveliest bouquets — a wreath of flow-

ers to match surrounded the ceiling — the gaslights streamed through ornaments shaped like lilies — a most lifelike group of water lilies, executed by Valentine Bartholomew, flower painter to her majesty, hung upon the wall — and four mirrors reflected the furniture of pale-blue satin and gold.

I stood a while gazing in dazzled astonishment. I had wished for comfort, not splendor, and was ungrateful enough to doubt that they had been, in this instance, united. The suspicion proved correct. The boudoir dressing chamber became a sort of show room, which crowds of visitors nightly begged the privilege of inspecting. The furniture was too costly for any but the most careful use. My meek maid (the same I mentioned in a previous chapter) used to say, with a sigh, "I don't like fairyland where there's *real work* going on. I don't dare to move any more than if I were in a glass house. Every thing looks as brittle as if it would break by looking at it!"

King Midas found it inconvenient to eat gold instead of bread. I was punished in a somewhat similar fashion ; discovering the comfortlessness of inappropriate magnificence.

The theatre opened with Epes Sargent's tragedy of Velasco. Fanny Vining personated Isidora, (of which Ellen Tree was the original in America,) and Mr. Davenport enacted Velasco. Both characters were finely delineated. The play found favor with the public, and was several times repeated.

A number of new plays were produced, with various degrees of success, during this season. But the palm was won by the classic tragedy of Virginia, translated from the French of Mr. Latour de St. Ybars, by John Oxenford, Esq. M. Latour dramatized the Roman

story of Virginia for Mademoiselle Rachel. The chief interest is made to turn upon the female character, and all opportunities afforded by the historical narrative for portraying the tender and heroic passions are carefully improved. Mr. Davenport enacted Virginius, and I Virginia.

Shakspeare's *Cymbeline* and *Twelfth Night* were revived, and ran for some nights. But the most eminently successful of all our Shakspearian revivals was *Romeo and Juliet*, produced in a style of magnificence, as regards scenery and stage appointments, that can seldom have been equalled in any theatre. Miss Fanny Vining gave a fervid impersonation of the impassioned Romeo; nor did her sex destroy the illusion, as might have been supposed. I never knew the tragedy so popular with the public, and never had a Romeo whom I liked so well. Mr. Davenport played Mercutio, and I Juliet. The play was repeated a number of nights in succession.

The season closed early in December, with Mr. Davenport's benefit—the house overflowing on the occasion. A portion of the company were engaged for the new Olympic. That theatre was to open at Christmas, under the same management as the Marylebone.

The manager, at the termination of this prosperous season, desired to express his acknowledgments to the ladies and gentlemen of the company and artisans engaged in the theatre. They accordingly received an invitation to assemble upon the stage on the evening after the theatre closed. A few of the literati and members of the press were also requested to attend. The theatre was decorated with garlands and banners, the stage thrown open to its full extent, and “set out”

as a ball room. At the upper end were three tables. One, running parallel with the footlights, was furnished with raised seats — these were designed for the manager, lessee, “stars,” the press, and invited guests; two other tables ran horizontally at either end of the centre banqueting board. The members of the company sat at one of these tables; the corps de ballet, artisans, &c., occupied the other. No one who had been regularly employed in the theatre was omitted in the general invitation; not even the somnolent little call boy, who might have preferred the rare luxury of going to bed betimes. Call boys are always sleepy.

Although the position of the subordinates of the theatre must on that night have been a novel one, to their honor be it spoken, the most fastidious observer could not have picked a flaw in their conduct. Their decorum was unimpeachable. No loud mirth was heard throughout the evening. Subdued enjoyment reigned in its place, with as strict observance of nice proprieties as would have been deemed necessary in an aristocratic ball room. ✓

The assembled company were addressed by the manager, who expressed to them his indebtedness for their exertions, and his regret at parting with some of their number. Various speeches were made by other parties present, and a number of favorite ballads sung by the musicians of the theatre and one or two guests. Albert Smith (of Mont Blanc *memory*) contributed largely to the entertainment by his comic relations. A few quadrilles and waltzes had been gone through before supper. There was but one cotillon and a country dance after the collation. It had been arranged that the entertainment should break up at an early hour.

The ceremony of leavetaking had just commenced, when a shriek, wild and ear-piercing, broke upon the startled crowd. A flying figure, enveloped in flames, was seen rushing up the stage. One of the young ballet girls had carelessly stood too near the footlights; her ball dress, of inflammable materials, had taken fire. Screaming frantically, she darted from side to side, fanning by her flight the devouring element, from which, in mad bewilderment, she thought to escape. She looked like a cloud of fire as she flew. Her white arms, tossed wildly above her head, were all of human form that was visible through the flames. Her cries were echoed from many lips. Those who could fled from the dangerous contact. Vain efforts were made by the gentlemen to seize her. But for the bravery of Mrs. Renshaw, the mistress of the wardrobe, the poor girl's life must in a few moments have been sacrificed. This courageous woman caught the burning girl in her arms, threw her to the ground, and fell upon her, smothering the flames, while she fearlessly burned her own face and hands. Others followed her example, and the fire was quickly extinguished.

I cannot attempt adequately to describe the scene that ensued upon the very spot where a few moments previous all had been serene and harmonious gayety. Some of the ladies fainted — some fell into violent hysterics — some ran screaming into the street. The gentlemen rushed about to obtain assistance for them. Above the mingled sounds of horror and confusion rose the shrill cries of the half-burned girl and the lamentations of her mother, who had been quickly apprised of the daughter's peril.

The person of the young girl was dreadfully burned.



her arms almost to the bone. Strange to say, her face remained untouched. For a time, her recovery was very doubtful. I saw her almost daily through her long illness, and her patience would have done credit to a stronger mind and higher station in life. The public testified their sympathy in a very substantial manner. Ample subscriptions were raised for her; the best medical attendance supplied; and not a few aristocratic carriages stopped at her humble residence, in one of the narrowest, closest streets in London, while she received charitable visits from the wealthy and fashionable owners.

I know nothing of the history of Miss R—— except what occurred during her illness. Ballet girls, in general, are a despised, persecuted, and often misjudged race. The rank they hold in a theatre is only a degree raised above that of the male supernumeraries. They are looked down upon by the acting members of the company as though they belonged to a different order of beings. In some London theatres they have a separate green-room from that devoted to the actors and actresses. They are not even allowed to enter the latter apartment; and yet, during my eight years' experience upon the stage, I have known amongst this despised class many and many an instance of girls endowed with the highest virtues, leading lives of unimpeachable purity, industry, devotion to their kin, and fulfilling the hardest duties of life with a species of stoical heroism.

The woman who, on the stage, is in danger of losing the highest attribute of her womanhood, — her priceless, native dower of chastity, — would be in peril of that loss in any situation of life where she was in some degree of freedom, particularly one in which she was compelled

✓ by circumstances to earn her own livelihood. I make this assertion fearlessly, for I believe it firmly. There is nothing in the profession *necessarily* demoralizing or degrading, not even to the poor ballet girl.

In support of this position, I give a brief sketch of a young girl, belonging to a ballet company, whose conduct I had the opportunity of watching for several years. I do not deem it necessary to mention the circumstances that first attracted my attention and caused me to take interest in her fate.

She had been educated as a dancer from infancy. She had been on the stage all her life; had literally grown up behind the scenes of a theatre. Her parents were respectable, though it is difficult to define their position in the social scale. At the time I knew her, her mother was paralytic and bedridden. The father was enfeebled by age, and could only earn a pittance by copying law papers. Georgina, the ballet girl, their only child, by her energetic exertions, supplied the whole wants of the family. And what were those exertions? The mind of the most imaginative reader could hardly picture what I know to be a reality. Georgina's parents kept no servant; she discharged the entire duties of the household—cooking, washing, sewing, every thing. From daylight to midnight not a moment of her time was unemployed. She must be at rehearsal every morning at ten o'clock, and she had two miles and a half to walk to the theatre. Before that hour she had the morning meal of her parents to prepare, her marketing to accomplish, her household arrangements for the day to make; if early in the week, her washing; if in the middle of the week, her ironing; if at the close, her sewing; for she made all her own and her mother's

dresses. At what hour in the morning must she have risen?

Her ten-o'clock rehearsal lasted from two to four hours — more frequently the latter. But watch her in the theatre, and you never found her hands idle. When she was not on the stage, you were sure of discovering her in some quiet corner — knitting lace, cutting grate aprons out of tissue paper, making artificial flowers, or embroidering articles of fancy work, by the sale of which she added to her narrow means. From rehearsal she hastened home to prepare the midday meal of her parents and attend to her mother's wants. After dinner she received a class of children, to whom she taught dancing for a trifling sum. If she had half an hour to spare, she assisted her father in copying law papers. Then tea must be prepared, and her mother arranged comfortably for the night. Her long walk to the theatre must be accomplished at least half an hour before the curtain rose — barely time to make her toilet. If she was belated by her home avocations, she was compelled to run the whole distance. I have known this to occur. Not to be ready for the stage would have subjected her to a forfeit. Between the acts, or when she was not on the stage, there she sat again, in her snug corner of the greenroom, dressed as a fairy, or a maid of honor, or a peasant, or a page, with a bit of work in her hands, only laying down the needle, which her fingers actually made fly, when she was summoned by the call boy, or required to change her costume by the necessities of the play. Sometimes she was at liberty at ten o'clock, but oftener not until half past eleven, and then there was the long walk home before her. Her mother generally awoke at the hour when Georgina was

expected, and a fresh round of filial duties were to be performed. Had not the wearied limbs which that poor ballet girl laid upon her couch earned their sweet repose? Are there many whose refreshment is so deserved—whose rising up and lying down are rounded by a circle so holy?

No one ever heard her murmur. Her fragile form spoke of strength overtaken; it was more careworn than her face. That had always a look of busy serenity off the stage, a softly-animated expression when occupied before the audience in the duties of her profession. She had a ready smile when addressed—a meek reply when rudely chided by the churlish ballet master or despotic stage manager. Many a time I have seen the tears dropping upon her work; but if they were noticed she would brush them away, and say she was a fool and cried for nothing. Her devotion to her parents was the strongest impulse of her nature. In her early youth she had been engaged to a young man, a musician, belonging to the orchestra. They had been betrothed for several years. Some fairer face, though he could scarcely have found a *sweeter*, had rendered him faithless. She bore her deep sorrow with that lovely submission which elevates and purifies the spirit, but gave her heart away no more. The breath of slander had never shadowed her name. Younger and gayer girls in the theatre used to designate her as the “old maid,” but this was the hardest word that any one ever applied to Georgina. Was not such a heart as hers what Elizabeth Barrett Browning has described as

“A fair, still house, well kept,  
Which humble thoughts had swept,  
And holy prayers made clean”?

Her answer to a sympathizing "How weary you must be at night!" was, "Yes; but I am so thankful that I have health to get through so much. What would become of my poor mother or of my father, if I fell ill?"

How many are there who can render up such an account of their stewardship as this poor girl may give in the hereafter? How many can say with her that life has been

" One perpetual growth  
Of heavenward enterprise " ?

And this flower blossomed within the walls of a theatre — was the indigenous growth of that theatre — a *wallflower*, if you like — but still sending up the rich fragrance of gratitude to Him by whose hand it was fashioned. To the eyes of the Pharisee, who denounces all dramatic representations, while with self-applauding righteousness he boldly approaches the throne of mercy, this "ballet girl," like the poor publican, stood "afar off." To the eyes of the great Judge, which stood the nearer?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Illness of Mr. Mowatt. — Voyage to Trinidad. — New Olympic Theatre. — Powerful Company. — Abolishing the "Star System." — Opening Night of the Olympic Theatre. — A Black-garbed Audience. — Refusal to appear in Mourning. — A White Compromise. — Inaugural Address written by Albert Smith. — Two Gentleman of Verona. — Queen Adelaide's Wardrobe. — Much Ado about Nothing. — Twelfth Night. — Othello. — The Noble Heart. — First Production of Fashion in London. — Critics. — Punch's Rebuke to the Morning Post. — The Farce of Floral Showers. — Critique from the Sun. — Literary Gazette. — The Sentiments of Adam Trueman hissed. — The American and English Personators of Prudence — Mental Discipline of Actors — Illustrative Sketches. — Mrs. Parker. — Mrs. Knight. — Three Histories.*

DURING this autumn Mr. Mowatt again fell seriously ill. One eye became totally blind — its vision was nevermore restored. He was threatened at times with entire loss of sight. Medical aid proved unavailing. A voyage to the West Indies was recommended as the sole remaining panacea. Always hopeful, he seized upon an idea so full of promise, and persuaded himself that a speedy and thorough cure would be effected through change of climate. My desire to accompany him was overruled. Nor was the execution of this wish feasible. The prostrating species of *mal de mer* to which I was subject, during the entire period of every sea voyage, would have rendered me a burden, and not a helpful companion. But even more imperative reasons compelled me to remain in London. It was only through the fulfilment of my engagements

that the necessary outlay, added to other heavy responsibilities, could be met. I was enjoying vigorous health — I was surrounded by warm and tried friends — I was not left alone. But he — Enough that he thought he had chosen the lesser evil; it was not in his nature to murmur at the inevitable.

He set sail for Trinidad in October, purposing to return in December, before the opening of the new Olympic. But Christmas came, and with it only a letter in the invalid's wished-for place. The sunny climate had benefited him, yet he was too feeble to undertake the homeward voyage. Every steamer brought cheerful and encouraging letters — but the day of his return was postponed from week to week. He had been apprised in Trinidad, that to leave a tropical latitude for the cold and uncertain climate of England, during the winter season, was to rush into certain danger. I was forced to lay aside my expectations as quietly as I best might, and to give up looking for him until spring.

The new Olympic Theatre was to open on the 26th of December. In English theatres there are no performances during Christmas week, nor, as with us, on Christmas eve or Christmas night.

No theatre in London could boast of a more powerful and extensive company than the Olympic. All the talent within reach had been monopolized by the manager at a rate of remuneration which the most prosperous theatre could ill support. Among this host of constellations were found the names of Davenport, Brooke, Conway, Wigan, Belton, Compton, — all actors, who, since that day, have shone separately as stars, — besides a bright cluster of lesser luminaries. The femi-

nine portion of the company consisted of Miss Fanny Vining, Mrs. Seymour, the Misses Marshall, Mrs. Marston, Mrs. Parker, Mrs. Wigan, Mrs. Horn, Miss Oliver, Miss Ellis, &c. — ladies of unquestionable talent in their several departments — a gifted and harmonious band. The stage management was under the direction of Mr. George Ellis, stage manager of her majesty's private theatre at Windsor Palace — one of the most accomplished directors of which the profession can boast.

I proposed that the "star system" should be abolished, that no names should appear at the head of the playbills as claiming the highest rank, but that all should stand upon their individual merits — leaving the public to award to every one his just position. The proposition was acceded to with one voice. The same plan had been adopted in other London theatres.

✓ Every actor is, of course, engaged for a separate "line of business." The "first old man" does not trench on the rights of the "low comedian," nor the "light comedian" interfere with the "heavy man," (or *villain* of the theatre,) nor the "leading juvenile" jostle against the "walking gentleman," nor the "first old woman" come in the way of the "second old woman," nor the "leading lady" of the "walking lady," nor the "heavy lady" of the "singing chambermaid" and "page," &c. The members of a company, in a well-organized theatre, resemble the men on a chess board. Each has his appointed place, and fights his battle for distinction in a fixed direction. I write this much for the uninitiated.

The Olympic Theatre was to open with Shakspeare's play of the Two Gentlemen of Verona, to be followed



by the usual fantastic Christmas pantomime. I was selected to deliver the inaugural address, written by Albert Smith, Esq. That was to end my duties for the night. Miss Vining and Mr. Davenport sustained the principal characters of the play.

The recent death of Queen Adelaide rendered it incumbent that all the company should appear upon the stage, during the singing of the national anthem, attired in mourning, or wearing mourning badges. I refused to comply with this request. While I respect the convictions of others, my own objections to the use of mourning, or rather, to wearing black as mourning, deserve, I hope, some better name than prejudice. At least, they are founded upon the religious belief which I profess, and are shared by the leading members of that faith in this country, though not in England. The force of English conventionality was too strong for me to obtain consent from the management to the violation of an established form. While the subject was under discussion, and both parties evinced a determination not to yield, a third person chanced to inquire whether I objected to wear white. I, of course, replied in the negative. "Then wear a dress of white crape, with trimmings of white crape, and without ornaments—that is considered mourning as much as the black to which you are opposed," was the satisfactory rejoinder. I gladly acceded to this proposition.

When the curtain rose upon the assembled company, prepared to sing "God save the Queen," I cannot conceive a more gloomily incongruous sight than was presented. In that gayly-decorated theatre, blazing with light, sat tier after tier of men, women, and chil-

dren, all habited in black. The merry faces and funereal garbs were strikingly inharmonious. On the stage stood the performers, arrayed in the same sable hue — those who were costumed for the play wore black badges, strangely at variance with their fantastic stage attire. My dress of white crape offered no disrespect to the memory of Queen Adelaide, and relieved, by contrast, the sombre aspect of the group in whose centre I stood.

At the close of the anthem the inaugural address was delivered. I exerted myself to give it a thoroughly humorous interpretation. As may be inferred from the name of the author, the address was not of a solemn character. The black-garbed audience indulged in the most vociferous merriment at Mr. Albert Smith's jokes. They were infinitely amused at his discovery that there was something extremely ludicrous in the burning of the old Olympic upon the site where the present edifice stood — the "*real water* flooding the Olympic stage" — the "*unexpected overflow*" in the theatre from the engine hose — the lessee's hopes "ending in smoke" — and the

"French ships' masts by English fire destroyed" \* —

a spectacle which at one period, he asserted, would have been particularly enjoyed.

The performance of the play afforded a quiet and rational gratification. But the uproarious mirth, of course, broke out anew at the whimsicalities of Matthews during the pantomime. The laughter produced by his singing of "hot codlins" showered with tears the cheeks of age and childhood. True, they were

\* The old Olympic Theatre was built of the masts of French ships.

wiped away with handkerchiefs that had a funereal edge of black ; but the merry mourners wore "the trappings and the outward garb of woe" with a jovial resignation quite consolatory to witness.

Shortly after this, the wardrobe of Queen Adelaide was sold. I purchased several of the richest of her regal robes. The garments of the actual queen have since decked the mimic representative of royalty upon the English as well as American boards.

My first appearance, except for the delivery of the address, was in Beatrice, a few nights after the opening. Mr. Davenport enacted Benedick.

Shakspeare's Twelfth Night was the next production. The characters in this play are very numerous, and the strength of the company was brilliantly exhibited.

Mr. Brooke's first appearance was in Othello ; Mr. Davenport represented Iago, Miss Vining Emilia, and I Desdemona.

The first new play produced was the Noble Heart, by Mr. Lewees, in which Mr. Davenport, Mr. Brooke, and I sustained the leading characters.

Fashion was the second novelty offered the public. I declined appearing. Miss Vining enacted Gertrude, and rendered the part more effectively than its author had ever done. Mr. Davenport personated the old farmer, Adam Trueman. The happy blending of deep pathos and hearty humor in his imbodiment made the performance a memorable one. The *mise en scène* of the comedy was truly magnificent.

The play, in spite of the admirable manner in which it was acted, did not meet with the same unequivocal species of success which attended the representation of

Armand before an English audience. Yet of twenty-seven-criticisms by the London press, twenty were favorable — perhaps because

“The quality of mercy *was* strained.”

The lashings of those critics who disdained that “quality of mercy” atoned for the leniency of the others. I have already alluded to the severity of the Examiner, who pronounced that Mrs. Trollope would, for such a production, have received, at the hands of America, a compensation very different from the one bestowed upon their countrywoman. But the critic gallantly prefaced his own condemnation by the more complimentary opinion of the Daily Times.

The savageness of the Morning Post was thus rebuked by Punch: —

“Mr. Jenkins last week favored the limited world in which he moves with a notice of the first representation of Mrs. Mowatt’s comedy — Fashion, or Life in New York; a play which, according to the Times, ‘has been acted with success at every chief city in the Union,’ and was received at our Olympic here with ‘tumultuous applause. It may,’ says Jenkins, ‘by some weak persons, be thought ungenerous in us, when speaking of the production of a lady, and a stranger, if we employ any language that is not highly complimentary; but genius is of no sex.’ And then Jenkins proceeds to abuse the lady and stranger’s play, elaborately, in every particular, with all his mighty soul and gigantic strength. For the dead set that he thus makes, he must, of course, have a motive, which, had he limited himself to strictures on the production itself, might possibly have been supposed to be a no meaner one than an excess of critical zeal. But Mr. Jenkins, not content with yelping at the play, must needs have a snap at the authoress. ‘When the actors,’ writes gently-sneering Jenkins, ‘had indulged us with another glance at their persons, a very general call from all parts of the house brought Mrs. Mowatt on the stage. The noise was then tremendous, and the shower of customary bouquets more weighty and continuous than we ever remember it to have been.

*The affair was a little overdone*; for not only were the flowers provided too profusely, *but the lady, in our eyes, appeared to be ready dressed for the occasion.* Why could you not have moderated the rancor of your pen a little, Jenkins? Why attack the lady and stranger personally? Is it your individual self, or your order, — Jenkins or flunkydome, — that Mrs. Mowatt has offended? Jenkins, you say ‘that genius is of no sex.’ Neither is criticism, as personified by you. At any rate, it is not manly.”

There was some truth in the “ready dressed for the occasion.” I was nervously uncertain of the success of Fashion, and went to the theatre in a morning wrapper, that, if the play failed, I might not seem to have anticipated a triumph. I passed the evening in a private box opening behind the scenes, and only made my toilet during the fifth act, when the success of the play was insured. As for the floral showers, those are always more or less a conventional farce. The friends of the performer usually arm themselves with bouquets, and the management as frequently prepare a second supply. I am not aware that the latter was the case at the production of Fashion; but it might have been. At all events, the number of personal friends who were present might well account for the *parterre*-like aspect of the stage during my reception. It is a mistake to suppose that the bouquet rain is ever a sign of the estimation in which an actor is held by the public in general, though it is often the evidence of private esteem. Sometimes the same bouquet is made to do service more than once during an evening.

The critics who condemned Fashion seemed to hold my country responsible for its shortcomings. Those who awarded the meed of praise in turn bestowed their eulogiums upon America, as due to her through one of her children.

The Sun prefaces its lengthy and laudatory criticism with the following :—

“America is worthily repaying the dramatic debt she owes us. The seeds of the dramatic art, which have been scattered by all our best dramatic artistes broadcast on the American soil, have fructified, and are now bearing fruit. America has, within the last three years, given us Miss Cushman, the greatest tragedian at present on the stage; Mrs. Mowatt, the most interesting of young tragedians, the most ladylike of genteel comedians, the only lady who has shown herself capable of taking Miss Foote’s line of characters since Miss Foote left the stage; Mr. Davenport, one of the most energetic and powerful actors of melodrama that has appeared of late years, and whose powers as a legitimate tragedian and as a genteel comedian are of no common order; besides a host of excellent delineators of Yankee peculiarities. But America has not given us, until last night, any play that would stand the test of representation before a London audience. Rough and ranting melodramas have formed the staple of what America had hitherto sent us; but last night this reproach was wiped out, and there was represented at the Olympic Theatre, with the most deserved success, an original American five-act comedy, the scene of which is laid in New York, and which delineates American manners after the same fashion as our own Garrick, Colman, and Sheridan were accustomed to delineate English manners, and which, as regards plot, construction, character, or dialogue, is worthy to take its place by the side of the best of English comedies.”

It will be observed that this critic ignores the representation of *Armand*, which was produced at the Marylebone a year before, and also of *Velasco*, produced at the same theatre. The *Literary Gazette* is less oblivious, though not so unqualifiedly eulogistic. Its review of the play has the following opening :—

“In the barrenness of home authorship, in the spirit of humiliation which attaches to our dependence upon the French for a mongrel dramatic literature, the public will greet with satisfaction the quasi-English production of an American author; and to this author even a qualified approval, tendered in spite of English self-love, must be gratifying. It became a fair and accomplished lady to

venture on the hazardous undertaking which Mrs. Mowatt *achieved, for the second time*, on Wednesday last, in the new arena of her exploits. The play is styled a comedy, and is entitled *Fashion*; but we would rather consider it what our neighbors call *un tableau de mœurs*.

Fashion ran two weeks, a much shorter period than *Armand*. On some evenings the republican sentiments met with ebullitions of displeasure from the audience. One night there was a very decided hiss at some of Adam Trueman's animadversions. With admirable presence of mind Mr. Davenport paused, coolly folded his arms, fixed his eyes upon that portion of the theatre from which the hiss proceeded, and waited for the decision of the audience, demanding by his manner whether the majority were prepared to sanction such an interruption. His perfect self-possession probably saved the play. A torrent of applause silenced the hisses of disapprobation, and commanded the performance to proceed.

*Fashion* was first published February, 1850.

I can never recall the London and New York representations of this comedy without remembering the sad histories of the English and American personators of Prudence, the Yankee spinster, perhaps the most comic character in the play; though I never intended it to be so, and never understood how it became so. I give a brief sketch of these sorely-tried "servants of the stage," in illustration of the mental discipline practised by actors, and of their absolute self-renunciation, in laying aside the most heartrending sorrows during the fulfilment of their duty.

Mrs. Parker, a most estimable woman and excellent actress, was the representative of Prudence in London. While the play was in rehearsal she suddenly received

a telegraphic despatch from Brighton, announcing that her husband was at the point of death. He had for several years been a victim to consumption. She hastened to him, and arrived in time to receive his dying thanks and parting words of tenderness. They had been united twenty-five years. The bond of mutual love between them seems to have been of the most holy kind, proved by love's highest tests — constancy and unselfishness. For years the devoted wife had supported her invalid husband and their children by her exertions on the stage.

When the last offices were performed, she returned to London. Fashion was to be produced in a couple of days more. If the part assigned to her were given to another while she indulged her natural grief, she could not demand the salary so necessary for the support of her children. Her only means of livelihood would be cut off for the length of time that the play ran. She begged to be excused from rehearsal as far as possible, but informed the management that she would perform her duty on the evening that the comedy was produced.

Who amongst the audience, that witnessed her comic delineation of the self-satisfied spinster, suspected that an agonized heart was masking its expression in the fictitious smiles that awakened their mirth? I shall never forget the look of intense but suppressed grief on her careworn countenance, when, as I was passing behind the scenes one evening, I stopped to speak to her and to thank her for her efforts. She was leaning against one of the wings, waiting for her cue to appear upon the stage. Her little daughter, of six years old, was holding her hand, and gazing up in the mother's face with a look of childish but troubled wonder. She was too young to feel her loss.



I expressed to Mrs. Parker my regrets that she should be forced to exert herself while in so unfit a state. Trying to conceal her emotion, but with lips that quivered uncontrollably, she answered, "Perhaps it is best for me; I should soon be quite useless if I dared give way; and the children ——" She could not finish her sentence, but turned her face from me, as she drew the little one at her side more closely to her. A moment afterwards she was on the stage, and I could hear the peals of laughter that followed her entrance.

Was not *duty* the strongest instinct of this high-hearted woman's nature? Was not her victory over self a triumph that thousands who have sunk into a state of inactive dejection, under the pressure of a similar sorrow, might bow before and acknowledge as holy?

Mrs. Knight was the original personator of Prudence in New York. Her name is endeared to the American public by a host of pleasant associations. Her talents were long the delight of audiences who used to crowd the Park Theatre in the good old times. When I became acquainted with her she was a widow, residing with her brother, for whom she had a sort of twin-like attachment. Her hopes were all centred upon an only daughter, a lovely being of seventeen. When Mrs. Knight was first presented to me this sweet girl stood by her side, eagerly listening to our conversation. I can vividly recall the delicate bloom of her cheek, the lustrous eyes, the finely-rounded form, that seemed glowing with health and the enjoyment

"Of life's pure pleasures manifold."

We never met again until Fashion was reproduced after my own *début*, and I enacted the character of

Gertrude. Mrs. Knight personated Prudence, as before. Grief had made such ravages in her face that I scarcely recognized her when we encountered each other behind the scenes. Her daughter's summons had come, shortly after I first saw her, in the form of consumption. She lingered a few months, filling her mother's breaking heart with alternate hopes and fears, and then departed. The bereaved mother had been completely crushed by the blow; yet there she stood, fantastically attired for a comedy, though life had become to her the saddest of tragedies. I watched her when she appeared on the stage, and could not perceive that her performance had lost any of the humor by which it had been formerly characterized; but in reality, every look, every word, every action was a mere mechanical effort—the body went through a set routine while the spirit was far away. When she left the stage, I twice saw her throw herself into a chair and burst into a flood of tears. At the stage summons, the scalding drops were hastily wiped away; but they seemed to reflow spontaneously the instant she was no longer within sight of the audience.

Some years afterwards I visited her in London. Her sorrow still rankled. Time, the great consoler, had poured no balm into the wound. Profuse weeping had brought on a disease of the eyes, and she had left the stage. She was still residing with her brother, to whom she clung as to her only earthly hope. Such a history speaks for itself; it needs no comment.

To these narrations I am tempted to add one more, in exemplification of the same class of virtues. I was not an eye witness to the facts; they were related to me by a friend.

Mr. Macready was representing Macbeth at Drury Lane. An actress of great public and private excellence personated Lady Macbeth. She was in the act of going upon the stage, when a letter was placed in her hands by the messenger of the theatre. She glanced at the handwriting and turned deadly pale—but her cue had been spoken by Macbeth. She thrust the letter in her bosom, and walked firmly upon the stage. When the curtain fell upon the close of the third act, my friend saw her with trembling hands hastily tear open the missive. She uttered one exclamation of intense agony, and with a face rigid as marble, but tearless eyes, re-folded the epistle. My friend asked her what had happened; but she could not command herself to answer. Stifling down her emotion, she hurried to her dressing room. The curtain rose for the fourth act. At the call boy's summons she reappeared, and with forced composure concluded the part of Lady Macbeth. It was not until the curtain fell, and her professional duty was at an end for the night, that her grief broke forth in tears and in words. The letter apprised her of the death of her husband, whom she had watched over with the truest womanly devotion through the most terrible of trials. He was a lunatic.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Ariadne.* — *English Version, by John Oxenford.* — *Closing Catastrophe.* — *The three Ariadnes.* — *Leaping the Rock.* — *Marie de Meranie.* — *The Misanthrope.* — *Uxmal.* — *Lovers' Amazements.* — *Jealousy of Actors.* — *Afflicting Tidings.* — *Loss of Memory.* — *Disastrous Close of the Olympic Theatre.* — *Charge brought against the Manager.* — *Attack of Brain Fever.* — *First Consciousness.* — *Dr. W—t's Communications.* — *The Manager's Trial.* — *Conviction.* — *Insanity.* — *Self-Destruction.* — *Mr. Mowatt's Return to England.* — *Shorn Tresses.* — *Journey to Malvern.*

THE classic tragedy of *Ariadne* was produced during this season at the Olympic. The *Ariâne* of Thomas Corneille, the younger brother (by twenty years) of the great Pierre Corneille, father of the French drama, was rendered into English blank verse by John Oxenford, Esq. The French *Ariâne* is one of Rachel's most magnificent personations. The female interest predominates throughout the play. Indeed, it is almost a monologue, and the character of *Ariâne* affords rich capabilities for the display of tragic powers. La Harpe says truly of *Ariâne*, "*Cette pièce est au rang de celles qu'on joue souvent, lorsqu'une actrice veut se distinguer par un rôle capable de la faire valoir.*"

The greenest laurels I ever won in London (at least of the Melpomene chaplet) were awarded to the interpretation of the wronged Greek maiden.

Mr. Davenport represented Theseus, and *looked* the hero — the author permits no more.

Phœdra, sister of *Ariadne*, rendered by a mediocre

actress, would have been an unimpressive character ; but Miss Vining, in the fourth act, electrified the audience by Phœdra's passionate burst of remorse after she had consented to betray her sister and fly with Theseus.

In Thomas Corneille's version, Ariadne is not succored by the god Bacchus, according to the old classical story ; but on the discovery of her abandonment by Theseus, she falls upon a sword and expires. The catastrophe is altered by Mr. Oxenford in the English version. A very startling scenic effect is produced by the leaping of Ariadne from a rock, and her plunging into the sea, while the ship of Theseus is disappearing in the distance.

The stage execution of this novel termination was managed in a manner worthy of mention. Three Ariadnes, all similarly costumed, and twin in resemblance, lent their aid to the accomplishment of the thrilling disaster.

The closing scene of the play represents a wildly picturesque portion of the Island of Naxos. In the distance rolls the sea. On one side a ledge of rocks rises to a dizzy height. From these there juts out a single peak — the loftiest summit of the island. Ariadne is pacing the shore when the terrible intelligence is disclosed that she is deserted by Theseus, and that Phœdra has fled in his company. A moment afterwards she beholds in the distance the ship which is bearing the fugitives to Athens. Frenzied at the sight, she rushes up the rocks, and climbs the highest peak, to catch the last glimpse of the vessel. When it disappears she is overcome by despair, and leaps into the sea.

The climbing of these rocks, and the execution of the theatrical stratagem by which the leap appears to be made by Ariadne, was a rather perilous experiment for a person of impetuous temperament and easily carried away by an exciting personation. It was decided that I could not be trusted to make the dangerous ascent. A young girl was selected from the ballet who strongly resembled me. Ariadne's Grecian robe, with its rich border of blue and gold, her double crown and jewelled zone, were duplicated for my counterfeit — Ariadne the second. But this was not all; the classic costume had to be again repeated for the toilet of Ariadne the third — a most lifelike lay figure. The face, arms, and bust of the latter were modelled from a statue, and were too faultless for the other two Ariadnes to object to their inanimate representative.

It was found no easy matter at rehearsal to persuade our timid Ariadne the second to even walk up the steep rocks. She stopped and shrieked half way, protested she was dizzy and might fall, and would not advance a step farther. After about half an hour's delay, during which the poor girl was encouraged, coaxed, and scolded abundantly, she allowed the carpenter who planned the rocky pathway to lead her carefully up and down the declivity; and finally she rushed up alone. Our lay representative was couched at the top, ready for her flight through the air. Ariadne the second, at a certain cue, suddenly falls upon her face, concealed from the audience by an intercepting rock. At the same moment a spring is touched, and the lay figure, with uplifted arms, leaps from the cliff, and drops into the abyss beneath.

At night, Ariadne the first, on beholding the ship of

Theseus, uttered a prolonged shriek, broke away from King Cénarus and his friends who impeded her steps, and flew up the rocks; but, turning a cliff at no great height from the stage, sprang off behind the scenes in the arms of a person stationed to receive her. Steps for her descent were found unavailable. At the instant Ariadne the first disappeared, Ariadne the second darted from behind the cliff, and swiftly clambered the rocky heights until she reached their very summit. Ariadne the first uttered the impassioned language of the Greek maiden from behind the scenes, while Ariadne the second was toiling up the rocks, and supposed to be speaking. At the words, "Die, Ariadne, die!" from the lips of Ariadne first, Ariadne second sinks upon the rock, and Ariadne third made her first appearance, and *unhesitatingly* sprang into the sea.

The resemblance of the three Ariadnes must have been striking, for I have been told the changes could not be detected by the most powerful opera glass.

The illusion was so perfect, that on the first night of the representation, when Ariadne leaped the rock, a man started up in the pit, exclaiming, in a tone of genuine horror, "Good God! she is killed!"

The success of Ariadne determined the manager to offer the public a series of new plays. This announcement caused some of the first dramatists in London to devote their talents to the interest of the theatre.

The first play accepted was the historical tragedy of Marie de Meranie, by Mr. Marston, author of the Patrician's Daughter, Strathmore, &c. I was to personate Queen Marie.\*

\* This play was eventually produced by Miss Faucit, at the Olympic.

The *Misanthrope*, by Douglas Jerrold, was the next drama put in rehearsal. Mr. Jerrold read his play to the assembled company in the greenroom. Miss Vining and myself were both called to the reading. It was anticipated that I would decline the *rôle* of the heroine — the part would, in that case, be enacted by Miss Vining. Mr. Jerrold expressed a desire that I should embody the character, in spite of its avowed insignificance; and, after listening to two acts, I consented.

A new classical drama, entitled *Uxmal*, by Mr. Heraud, containing many original situations and some poetry of a high order, was under consideration, and would have been accepted.

Added to these, Leigh Hunt had sent to me his drama of *Lovers' Amazements*, with the hope that I would be the means of introducing it to the public. This drama had been written some years. Leigh Hunt states that the equal amount of interest with which the four principal characters are invested had been the barrier to the play's production. The larger portion of leading actors dread a rival on the dramatic field whom the author has furnished with weapons as powerful as their own. *Lovers' Amazements* was, however, accepted at the Olympic, and the characters were to have been filled by Mr. Davenport, Mr. Brooke, Miss Vining, and myself.

The proverbial jealousy which characterizes even many distinguished members of the profession may be detected in various ways by an audience; and it is well that it should be. The following are a few enlightening hints: —

One strong evidence of jealousy makes itself apparent



when an actor "backs up the stage," as it is called, while another is delivering important speeches addressed to him, thus compelling the speaker to turn his back to the audience, or talk over his shoulder to a person behind him. When the parties on the stage do not stand side by side, or in a semicircle, if several chance to occupy the stage at the same time, the proper situation of the one who has the most important passages to deliver (be he star or the humblest subordinate) is a little in retreat of the others. In this position he faces the audience, and yet looks towards those whom he is addressing. Few are the leading actors who will accord this just privilege to an actor of inferior rank.

Another straw by which a shrewd observer may detect which way the wind of envy blows, is the readiness of an actor to interrupt the applause which the audience are about to bestow upon another, by hastening his own replies when he finds the plaudits about to commence. An audience who would follow the play are thus compelled to be silent; and, through the trick of an envious brother, the actor loses the encouragement upon which many depend for inspiration.

When an actor distracts the attention of the audience by inappropriate or superabundant by-play, or fidgeting and muttering while another actor is delivering effective language, it is a certain symptom of the narrowmindedness which dreads to behold a rival win public favor.

The perfect representation of a play demands that every actor should be allowed the untrammelled use of his abilities. It is often in the power of the audience themselves to secure him this desirable privilege.

While the four new plays which I have mentioned

above were in course of preparation, our tidings from the invalid at Trinidad grew sadder than ever. Letters written by a hand so feeble that it seemed hardly able to guide the pen confirmed our worst fears. The arrival of every steamer became a day of dread. Every letter was the herald of a fresh alarm, until the pulses of Hope were almost stopped, or "changed to long despairs."

Just at this period letters from America brought intelligence of an exciting and distressing nature. These combined sorrows had a serious effect upon my already overtasked mind. I lost the power of mental concentration so essential on the stage. Worse yet, I lost my memory, which up to that period had been "marble to retain." Sometimes while personating characters with which I was most familiar, which I had acted again and again without altering a syllable of the text, the words would suddenly fade from my thoughts; I could not recall even the subject of the dialogue. Prompting was useless. Now and then I recovered myself by a determined effort; more frequently I had to depend upon my sympathizing fellow-laborers to conceal as far as possible my entire obliviousness. Behind the scenes I kept the book of the play in my hand, and studied continually, but to no purpose. I constantly went upon the stage in an agony of dread, uncertain whether I could struggle through the coming scene. The theatre became to me a region full of terrors.

I must relate as rapidly as possible the events next in order. They are too painful to be dwelt upon. I would gladly omit them could I do so conscientiously. Against the manager of the Olympic Theatre, whose many charities, whose great liberality, and unvarying kindness

had won him the respect and esteem of the whole company, were brought appalling charges. He had been, for many years, the accountant of an Assurance Association. He was accused of some species of fraud or embezzlement. I believe these were not the legal terms used—it was, however, their meaning. The theatre was suddenly closed, the company scattered—the manager, confident, to all appearance, of being acquitted, gave himself up for trial.

Several days previous to the occurrence of this last terrible event, I had become so seriously ill that my name was withdrawn from the bills. Miss Vining assumed the characters which I usually personated. The new shock completed what an accumulation of sorrows had begun. Immediately after the closing of the theatre, I was attacked with brain fever. The four succeeding months are a blank to me. There are no distinct records in the book of memory.

My first recollection is of opening my eyes (from sleep, as I thought) upon the countenance of Dr. W——tt, who was intently gazing in my face. He was sitting by my bed. A nurse, whose kind features were unfamiliar to me, stood on one side—on the other a much-loved female friend. I did not recognize the room in which I was lying. I had been removed there during my illness. I remember hearing the doctor whisper to my friend, “Hush! She is coming to herself.” He asked me if I knew him. I answered in the affirmative, and thought the question an odd one; for he was a physician whose friendship I greatly prized. Of the lapse of time I had not the remotest conception. Dr. W—— wisely determined not to deceive me in regard to my illness or any of the events which had taken place

during my long unconsciousness. At my eager inquiries he took up the broken chain of memory, and supplied the missing links. Mr. Mowatt had returned to England some months previous—he was better—I should soon be allowed to see him.

The theatre—it was still closed. It had been opened but one night, and that was on the occasion of a benefit given to Miss Vining. The company were heavy losers. The manager—very gently the kind doctor communicated the fearful intelligence that related to him. He had been tried—convicted—severely sentenced; the shock had overpowered his reason; he had perished the same night by his own hand. The jury of inquest had brought in a verdict of “temporary insanity.”

I cannot attempt any description of my meeting with the one being whose sufferings had been as great as my own; greater, for I retained no recollection of physical afflictions. Through the sunshine of joy that irradiated his face I could trace many a deep furrow, ploughed by grief and disease, which was not there when we parted. His health was still in the most precarious state, though he had rallied during the spring months. He landed in England before any letter could apprise him of my illness.

During his absence, and after his return, I had been most tenderly nursed by faithful friends, to whose unwearied devotion I have every reason to believe I owe my life.

How well I recall the strange thrill that ran through me when I first lifted my hand to my head! The long, abundant tresses had disappeared. A few round rings of hair were left in their place. They told me that my physician and friends were very anxious that my hair

should be preserved. Its weight encumbered my head when confined by comb or band, and when loosened became inextricably tangled about my shoulders. I constantly entreated that it might be cut off. No one was willing to perform the office. The demand was looked upon as the raving of fever. One day I had been accidentally left alone for a few minutes, and a pair of scissors lay in a work basket near me. I was found sitting up in bed, and the shorn ringlets severed closely from the head, lying in every direction. The mistress of the wardrobe, who on the night of my London *début* had sneered at the "heap of hair" as an unaristocratic adornment, would have been well pleased.

Mr. Mowatt had visited Dr. W——n's water-cure establishment at Malvern. He was very desirous of making further trial of hydropathic treatment. I also was prepossessed in its favor. In about a fortnight after my first return to consciousness I was able to accompany him to Malvern. A bed was made for me in the railway carriage, and I bore the journey with less fatigue than could have been anticipated.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Cottage at Malvern. — Malvern Hills. — Water-cure Establishment. — Donkey Rides. — Malvern Donkey Driver. — Adventures on Horseback. — Hanly Castle. — Return to London. — Skill of Dr. D——n. — A Sufferer's Contemplation of Death. — Interview with Dr. D——n. — Life's hardest Necessity. — A Last Conversation. — The Parting.*

A TINY cottage, that looked like a bird's nest dropped in a fairy circle, was our home at Malvern. The miniature dwelling stood in the centre of a garden so luxuriant that the floral beauties, crowding cheek to cheek, struggling to overtop each other, seemed engaged in a perpetual contention which should unfold most loveliness to the sun or fling most fragrance on the breeze. Close to the cottage

“ Rose trees, either side the door, were  
    Growing lithe and growing tall;  
    Each one set a summer warder  
    For the keeping of the hall —  
With a red rose, and a white rose, leaning, nodding at the wall.”

Standing in the little garden, facing the cottage, a range of magnificent hills formed the background of the landscape — hills that appeared to be young mountains just gaining their growth. These Malvern hills were the scene of Langland's poetic visions. Their picturesque grandeur must have filled any dreamer's brain with shapes of ideal beauty, and may have given birth to many an unpenning inspiration.

Upon an eminence, a short distance from our cottage, stood Dr. W——n's water-cure establishment. Both invalids sought the benefits of hydropathy, and were attended daily by Dr. W——n. But candor compels me to say that only one adhered to the rules enforced at the establishment. After the first month, during which period my health made little visible progress, I decided by my own feelings what portion of the treatment agreed with me, and discarded that which did not.

Before long I was able to mount a donkey, one of the most docile and obedient specimens of that much-abused race. I generally rose soon after the sun had set me the example, and, while the morning mists were rolling up the hills, my gentle donkey carried me to their summit. The eye never wearied of daguerreo-typing the rich panorama that encircled these mountain-like hills. On every side fresh prospects were unfolded—their aspect varying with the changing lights. I spent many an hour watching, in wondering admiration, the kaleidoscope hues of each new scenic phase.

Once or twice Mr. Mowatt accompanied me in a garden chair, but the exercise was found too fatiguing. I took my daily donkey excursions, attended only by the boy driver walking at the donkey's side. This youth was born beneath the shadow of Malvern hills, and often amused me with his original conceptions of the world beyond. We exchanged opinions on various subjects; and now and then, under the startling influence of a new idea, he would come to a sudden stop in his trotting walk, and exclaim, "Good golly! you don't believe that now—surely (pronounced *lie*) you doesn't!" Who can say through what narrow crevices the light of truth may shine in upon a darkened mind?

What tiny seed, casually scattered, may take root in unbroken soil and spring heavenward?

I believe I reciprocated some of the donkey-boy's chagrin when his attendance was no longer needed and the donkey was exchanged for a horse. A solemn-looking steed it was, decidedly advanced in years, and warranted to have renounced all youthful indiscretions. Trusting to his good character, I started upon my first ride unattended. The ladies at Malvern frequently make excursions on horseback alone. My staid-looking Pegasus unexpectedly ran away with me, and was stopped by some countrymen. We subsequently learned that he was once quite a celebrated racer, and had won several trophies. The approach of age had caused his present retirement into private life.

I rode him every day for six weeks; and he never ran away with me but once more, and then he was influenced by the dangerous effect of bad example. I was riding with a friend. Her horse took fright and ran. Mine called to mind his ancient victories, and did not choose to appear wanting in spirit. The two horses passed each other again and again on the road, both riders being unable to hold them in. I could only cry out to my friend, as I darted by her, "Keep your seat, Fanny—keep your seat, and there is no danger!" Her exhausted "I can't! I can't!" terrified me so much, that by a sudden impulse I turned my horse's head into a hawthorn hedge. He stopped suddenly, and evinced some slight displeasure at the indignity. On looking back I saw my friend lying upon her horse, almost insensible, and a gentleman holding her reins with those of his own horse. I rode back to them. The stranger proved to be a physician. We supported



the now helpless equestrian between us, and walked our horses to Hanly Castle, which was just in sight. The castle is occupied by some of the descendants of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote and Shakspearian memory. We alighted, and my friend was carried into the house. Our unexpected but most gracious host and hostess tenderly ministered to the sufferer, and for some time after she revived would not allow us to leave their hospitable roof. The horses were sent home by a groom, with a message informing Mr. Mowatt of our safety. About an hour afterwards the carriage of our host was brought to the door, and he accompanied us home. From that time I rode alone, and found my sedate steed more manageable than when in company.

After four months' sojourn in Malvern we returned to London. Towards the close of our stay Mr. Mowatt had grown rapidly worse. He almost entirely lost the use of his limbs. The strong arms of a friend were needed to bear him from his sofa to the carriage. All his energies, physical and mental, appeared suddenly to fail. Night brought to his sufferings no oblivious balm, morning no invigorating relief.

At this crisis, the entreaties of friends induced us to call in the celebrated Dr. D——n, the discoverer and promulgator of the chrono-thermal practice of medicine. We were already personally acquainted with him and his lovely wife—and were familiar with certain of his cures, which almost deserve the name of marvellous. With his coming departing hope dawned anew, and once more painted the bow of promise upon our future. His skill procured the sufferer almost instantaneous relief—arresting the disease which was beyond mortal cure.

The invalid was now confined entirely to his bed, but the spirit of pain had been exorcised. A holy calm diffused itself about that death bed, as though the breathings of good angels enveloped it with a heavenly aura. The veil of eternity was falling around it — not in funereal blackness that speaks of annihilation, but in the golden and purple folds of promise, descending from the “new heavens.” To him who lay upon that couch, in purified patience of spirit, Death was a smiling angel of invitation, throwing open the crystal portals of the future, and joyfully beckoning the new guest into mansions of more perfect life — a life of holier uses — more ineffable joys — more conscious individuality — more angelic progression. Very often, with placid brow and in serene tones, he spoke of the coming change. His faith was so full of living, quickening *certainty*, that it rebuked the tears whose rebellious fall would have profaned such a death bed. He had not dwelt in the suburbs of the Holy City, but entered into its innermost temple. The doctrines of the New Church had not been received into his *memory* merely, but had come forth into his daily *life*, and been inscribed upon his heart. A never-wavering trust had cast out fear, and given to the foot of the Summoner the sound of music.

His worldly arrangements were made with the methodical precision that usually characterized his actions — his still-entangled affairs were smoothed as far as possible. *That* over, his own words were, “I am ready to go; yet I have found sweetness enough in this life to be willing to stay.” “Thy will, not mine!” was his spirit’s true expression.

A couple of months passed on, and the invalid grew decidedly better. He never left his bed, yet he gained

strength — his sight was partially restored — his ever-cheerful bearing often verged upon actual gayety. The skill of his physician was fighting a hard battle with the great conqueror.

His symptoms became so favorable that I could not but cling to the probability that he might yet recover. After a time he did the same. My own health, which was not entirely restored when I left Malvern, under the care of Dr. D——n became thoroughly reëstablished, and I had need for all my strength.

My long illness had commenced in the spring — winter was approaching. As soon as my perfect restoration became known, I had numerous offers for theatrical engagements. Then, for the first time, Mr. Mowatt disclosed to me that by far the larger portion of all we possessed, the hard earnings of a long period of exertion, had, for business purposes, been left in the hands of the manager of the Olympic Theatre. ✓

In his ruin it had been swept away. It became needful that I should resume my labors the instant I felt able. I pass over what this intelligence was to me. Life in all its bitter necessities — its hard requirements — had brought no extremity that tried me as did this.

My most advantageous offers were in the provinces. I must leave my vigils beside a couch which I still believed might be the bed of death, to wear the mockery of glittering robes in the frigid atmosphere of a theatre.

I sought a private interview with Dr. D——n, and entreated him to disclose to me his patient's true condition. The doctor's reluctance to comply with my request was almost answer sufficient. I told him frankly our exact situation, and implored him not to conceal from me the truth. I shall never forget or

cease to be grateful for the feeling which he exhibited. His answer was, "I have seen so many wonders effected by a proper medical treatment, that I am never inclined to say that a recovery is *impossible*. In the case of Mr. Mowatt, I fear that it is *improbable*. No one can decide how long he may live. It may be a few months, and it may be much longer."

"Might the time be even shorter?"

"It *might* be ; but he appears so much better that I do not anticipate any immediate danger.

"And what must I do?"

"Any thing rather than excite him by opposition, if you would not produce fatal consequences."

"Do you mean to say that I must leave London and fulfil some of these engagements? for the most advantageous one, the one he entreats me to accept, is in Dublin."

"Yes ; if he is bent upon it, you must go."

I dreaded nothing so much as beholding "cares for the morrow" reënter, with disturbing influence, the now peaceful mind of one whose morrows on earth were numbered. Without further hesitation, I told him I would go. Richly did his reply reward the struggle for self-government which enabled me to make the decision.

The Dublin engagement was accepted for January. I was to remain absent but three weeks, and then hasten back to London.

Mr. Davenport was at that period engaged at the Haymarket Theatre, having been selected by Mr. Macready as his support during his farewell of the stage. This precluded the possibility of Mr. Davenport's accompanying me. It was finally decided that I should

make the journey alone, attended by Mrs. Renshaw in the capacity of lady's maid. Her name has before been mentioned in these memoirs as the person whose courage saved the life of a young girl at the Marylebone Theatre. This instance of presence of mind, added to her well-known respectability and her accomplishments as a costumer, caused her to be selected by Mr. Mowatt as a trustworthy companion. She had officiated as mistress of the wardrobe in two theatres, but had never before entered service. She had been a widow for more than twenty years. The maid whom I have several times alluded to in previous chapters was her elder sister, and had waited upon me ever since I came to London. She was at this period Mr. Mowatt's nurse, a very pattern of devotion and patience, and was to remain with him.

The night before I commenced my journey, the invalid called me to his bedside. He pointed out a small trunk, and said, that, should it be the will of our Lord that this parting was our last on earth, I would find in that trunk several letters — one of which he trusted would prove full of comfort. The doctor had warned me to give way to no emotion ; and I could but listen in silence while he spoke of the future, the present, the past. He talked of the child who had walked by his side to school — of the young girl he had educated, the spring days of whose existence he had filled with earth's rosiest hues ; of the companion whom, when life ceased to be a pastime, God had gifted with strength to bear one half the appointed burden. It was past midnight when I left him, sinking peacefully to sleep ; and

“I charged my soul to hold my body strengthened for the sun.”

Well I might; for with that morning came the fixed conviction that I was looking for the last time upon a face which, at least when it turned to me, had ever been full of tenderness.

The train for Liverpool started soon after daylight. Long before that period Mrs. Renshaw had been called to the bedside of the invalid, and I was asked to complete my preparations in my own little room adjoining.

When I was again summoned, I did not inquire what had been the subject of conversation. I soon discovered it when I found that I had not a settled peculiarity — an odd fancy — an especial taste with which my companion had not suddenly become acquainted. True to her promise, she used her best endeavors to gratify the tastes, yield to the fancies, and respect the peculiarities. When her perfect knowledge of my ways drew from me many a surprised “Who told you to do that?” or, “How did you know I liked that?” there was always the same answer.

The moment of parting came. The suffering one left behind retained his smiling composure to the end. For me, I might well be thankful that his last words were a blessing; for I never heard the sound of his voice again.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*The Iron Duke. — Arrival in Dublin. — A Dilemma. — “Unprotected Females.” — Interview with theatrical Housekeeper. — Hunting for Lodgings. — The invisible Avant Courier. — Mr. Calcraft. — G. V. Brooke. — First Rehearsal. — Début at Theatre Royal. — Dublin Audience. — Attachment of the Irish to America. — The Freeman’s Journal. — Production of Armand. — Peculiarities of the Dublin Pit and Gallery. — Persecution of an Actor. — An amusing Device. — My last Night. — Scene at the Stage Door. — Dublin Friends. — The Invalid in London. — Extracts from his daily Letters. — Engagement at Newcastle upon Tyne. — Departure from Dublin.*

WE crossed the channel in the steamer called the Iron Duke, the strongest and swiftest on the line. I found comfort in the name; it accorded with my experiences. Iron seemed the inflexible necessity that launched me upon this new and lonely career. Iron-like must the courage be which could enable me to face the future; of iron the strength which was needed to endure the present.

Every one who has crossed the channel will remember the physical distress produced by the quick, sharp, jerking motion of the waves — far more trying than the regular rolling of the ocean. All night the rain poured in torrents; but we were told that our passage was *quite smooth*. “Then Heaven help us through the rough ones!” was our involuntary ejaculation.

At daylight we reached Kingston. The train started at eight o’clock, and we arrived in Dublin at half

past eight. We expected Mr. Calcraft, the lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, where I was engaged, to meet us at the station. He was not there. We waited until every passenger had disappeared ; still he did not come. What was to be done ? This was my first journey unsurrounded by the tender protection of relatives or friends, and my London maid had never before been sixty miles removed from the sound of Bow bells. The two forsaken-looking beings, who, in frozen bewilderment, stood shivering beside a huge pile of trunks, would have added a speaking addition (though they were nearly speechless) to Punch's portraits of "unprotected females." We were soon surrounded by an army of cabmen, who intermingled their offers to transport us "any where under the face of the sun" with a flood of most ludicrously flattering ejaculations. But what would have been the height of impertinence in an English cab driver flowed so naturally from the lips of a son of green Erin that it disarmed rebuke.

Not knowing how to dispose of ourselves, for we were decidedly overburdened with our own safe keeping, we drove to the theatre in hope of finding the manager. Mr. Calcraft was not there ; it was too early in the morning. Who *was* there ? Nobody but the old housekeeper, and she was not up. Would she get up ? "Sure and she would, if we could wait," was the answer received. We wrapped ourselves in our travelling blankets for protection against the frosty air that whistled in from every side of the loosely-built Irish vehicle, and waited.

By and by the housekeeper thrust her good-humored face out of the stage door,\* and, after giving us an

\* Door leading from behind the scenes.



inquisitive *reconnaissance*, advanced. There was considerable cap-tying, and hook-and-eyes claspings, and other adjustments of her hurried toilet accomplished on her way to the carriage.

I told her who we were. "Och, and is it the new star lady from London? Sure, and you're welcome; and it's every body that's wanting to see you!" was her hearty salutation.

I inquired for Mr. Calcraft. He expected us in the half past nine o'clock train, and would be at the station at that hour. Had he engaged a suite of apartments as I had requested by letter?

"Sure, and he hasn't," was the answer. "He said ye'es wanted three rooms on a floor, opening together, and they wasn't to be found in all Dublin."

"Did he secure any other rooms for me?"

"Bless you, no; he was afraid nothing else would suit."

"But what am I to do?"

"Lord love ye! Sure, and we'll find some place for ye the day! Couldn't ye just step into the theatre and wait a while?"

Wait a while in a cold, dark theatre, when we were freezing and starving, and the shelter of a warm room was almost indispensable to the prolongation of our lives!

"I can't wait," I answered; "we will look for lodgings ourselves; if we find them, I will send you the address. If not, we will return here."

"Ye don't mane you're going hunting for rooms at this hour of the morning, and in that hasty sort of a style?"

"Yes ; I am an American, and we always *make haste !*"

The good woman gave voluble vent to her astonishment at the proposed rapid mode of transacting business.

What part of the city should we drive to ? was the next question ; for I was not acquainted with a single Dublin locality. My London friends had supplied me with letters of introduction. I remembered that the address of one, to Lady R——e, was Merrion Square. The name sounded musically attractive. Merrion Square must be some pleasant place. "Drive to Merrion Square," was the order given the coachman, "and stop at the first baker's or green grocer's after you get there."

Merrion Square was quickly reached, and my anticipations of the agreeable vicinity were realized. We stopped at a green grocery. Mrs. Renshaw alighted, and inquired of the smiling grocer's wife whether there were any desirable lodgings to be obtained in the neighborhood.

She received a direction to three houses that had unoccupied suites of apartments. We drove to the first, which was close to the square. The exterior was sufficiently inviting ; the interior passed from good to better. There were three large, well-furnished rooms on the second floor — precisely what we wanted. Ten minutes after we stepped from the carriage the rooms had been engaged, I was lying on a comfortable sofa, and Mrs. R—— was preparing a refreshing cup of tea. So much for our American mode of helping ourselves. Had we trusted to the exertions of our Irish friends, possibly these "consummations devoutly to be wished" might have blessed us about midday, or at nightfall.

"This looks like some sort of Aladdin's lamp business!" exclaimed my wondering attendant, looking around her. "It seems as though these rooms had been all prepared by our just wishing for them, and as if they were waiting ready for us to walk in!"

It certainly did appear as though some invisible *avant courier* had made all necessary preparations for our comfort and smoothed away every difficulty. I never could get this odd notion out of my head. We remained in these singularly-obtained lodgings through our whole stay in Dublin, and had ample cause to be pleased with them. From our landlady and her truly beautiful daughter we received the most devoted attentions. The latter was one of the many perfect specimens of female loveliness which I beheld in Dublin. I am half inclined to think that the palm of feminine perfection belongs to the daughters of the Emerald Isle.

In the course of the day Mr. Calcraft called upon me. I found him a gentleman of polished manners, accustomed to the most refined society, and highly educated. With his dramatic authorship I was already acquainted. I had very frequently acted in his version of the *Bride of Lammermoor*. Scott's thrilling history of the broken-hearted maiden was originally dramatized by Calcraft for Mrs. Henry Siddons. She personated Lucy Ashton a number of times at the Dublin Theatre Royal, of which he was manager. I enacted the character upon the same stage.

When I arrived in Dublin Mr. Brooke had just fulfilled an engagement of some length. He was re-engaged to appear with me. His was the only familiar face that I saw at my first rehearsal. Lonely I could not but feel; but I had no trials to undergo similar to

those which rendered my first rehearsals in Manchester and London a species of theatrical purgatory. The influence of a gentlemanlike manager was felt throughout the theatre. The actors were courteous in the extreme, and vied with each other in readiness to conform to the wishes of the stranger.

✓ We opened in the *Lady of Lyons*. I chose that character because there is no necessity for exertion in the first two acts, and abundance of time to get over any attacks of stage fright.

Happily the dreaded stage demon kept far off from me. I scarcely experienced a nervous tremor, and never made a more self-possessed first appearance.

✓ I know of no audience who exert so inspiring an influence over an actor as the Dublin. Their thorough enjoyment, their quick comprehension, their ready responsiveness to exalted sentiments, their genuine tokens of delight, often expressed in a comic, and always in a hearty manner, bear the performer as upon a triumphant wave to the Elysian shores of success. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and rouses his energies, kindles his ambition, and renders even labor a pleasure. To act tamely before that audience would be an impossibility. No genius could slumber in such a vivifying atmosphere, no aspirations become weary, no ardor grow cold.

My *début* was a highly successful one. The Dublin press were prodigal of panegyrics. The spirit of chivalry which always animates the breast of an Irishman towards womanhood would have made them regard me with favorable eyes; but that I was a stranger, and an American, was sufficient excuse for any courteous extravagance. How dear America and her children are

to Ireland was proved to me daily, and in many flattering ways, during my stay in Dublin.

I quote the paragraph which prefaces the critique upon my first performance, which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal*, to make apparent that, in spite of the enthusiasm which I have described as characterizing a Dublin audience, they claim for themselves the most fastidious discrimination as critics : —

“ On last evening Mrs. Mowatt appeared for the first time before our Dublin audience. This event, doubtless highly interesting to the admirers of dramatic novelty, and looked forward to with pleasurable anticipations by connoisseurs who constitute critical authority on affairs dramatic, must have been considered an occasion somewhat trying by an artist of whose natural genius and histrionic ability public report has spoken so highly, sustained by the ornate and elaborate criticisms of the American and English press. Throughout the whole range of stage representation, actors and actresses, from the highest to the lowest, from Macready and Siddons to the humblest professor of light comedy, all have dreaded the ordeal of a Dublin audience. It might, perhaps, seem needless to remind the readers of this journal of the fastidious character of that same audience, the most considerate, as it is the most just and generous, of any before which true genius has ever presented its claims. We would not do so were it not that we wish to enhance the magnitude and the delicacy of the compliment paid on last evening by that audience to the fair and gifted actress who came before them as a daughter of America — the adopted land of thousands of our countrymen.”

Armand was produced towards the close of the engagement, and never created a more powerful sensation. Mr. Brooke's delineation of the peasant Armand was interrupted by cheers from the commencement to the close of the play. The galleries fairly seemed inclined to make a descent upon the stage, and carry him off upon their shoulders. At the summons before the curtain, after the most deafening clamors of applause,

as I was making my final acknowledgment, the cry rose of "Nine cheers for America!" The pit started to their feet, and lustily gave the cheers with waving hats and handkerchiefs. When the last peal ceased, the orchestra struck up "Hail, Columbia!" and drew down a new response. Our national air was immediately followed by "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning," which always creates a furor of patriotic delight.

The audience are particularly addicted to audible criticisms. It was quite usual for them, when struck by any of my efforts, to cry out, "Bravo, America!" "America forever!" "Long life to young America!" The pit and galleries are in the habit of constantly addressing the actors upon the stage, expressing gratification or displeasure in very decided terms. "Bless your swate face!" or, "The Lord love ye!" is not an unusual salutation to a favorite female performer; and similar expressions of affectionate delight are called forth by the action of the play in which she is concerned. In spite of their readiness to be pleased, they are also alarmingly despotic, and their chiding is often merciless. With some of Shakspeare's plays they are so conversant, that, if an actor make a mistake in the text, they will correct him with a rebuke, and force him to repeat the passage.

I was a witness to one painful instance of their tyranny over an innocently offending individual. We were performing Planché's comedietta of *Faint Heart*. The actor who personated the old Marquis had rather an indistinct voice, caused, I think, by loss of teeth. The galleries cried out to him, "Spake a little louder, will ye?" His efforts to render his voice audible were not sufficiently successful to please them, and they continued to shout, at intervals, "Spake up!" "Spake up, old gray-

beard!" The actor became so much confused that he could scarcely speak at all. In an undertone I entreated him to go on without noticing the interruptions. He endeavored to do so, but signally failed. Somebody then sang out, "Take a little wather!" and another voice cried, "Blow your nose, will ye? and let's hear your voice!" Each of these recommendations was followed by a peal of merriment. The persecuted Marquis trembled visibly, and the big drops of moisture began to roll from his brows. Still he uttered every word of his part correctly, though his voice continued thick and husky. All at once some individual, who fancied himself particularly penetrating, called out, "Ah, its drunk he is!" "He's drunk!" "He's drunk!" was echoed on every side, and the accusation was accompanied by groans and hisses.

The man was not in the least degree intoxicated or excited by any stimulus, as was afterwards proved when he was called up before the manager. But shame and terror at the imputation upon his sobriety almost took from him the power of articulation, and as he led me from the stage (which the action of the play demanded) he almost reeled. His emotion was so great behind the scenes that he turned a deaf ear to all consolation. In a few minutes we were obliged to reappear upon the stage together. No sooner had he opened his lips than he was greeted with the salutations, "Ah, ye drunken loon!" "Aren't ye ashamed?" "Is that the respect ye show to a lady?" "Go home wid ye!" &c. The unfortunate actor was so thoroughly confounded that fright actually gave him the appearance of a man not sober. We "cut the scene" as much as possible. I blended my speeches in a manner that precluded the

necessity of his answering, and he soon had the opportunity of again making his exit. The exigencies of the play required that the Marquis should make his appearance once more before its close. His cue was spoken in a loud tone, and his entrance announced; but no Marquis was forthcoming. Again and again the cue was repeated, with sundry glances at the prompter; but no Marquis presented himself. What was to be done? There was a dead pause — and a long wait — and the sound of voices in remonstrance or entreaty proceeding from behind the scenes; but still no Marquis appeared. The audience began to evince their impatience and displeasure. I caught sight of the stage manager at the wing, earnestly gesticulating, and apparently in a great state of consternation. As I approached the entrance, he whispered to me, “What on earth shall we do? The poor fellow is so frightened there’s no forcing him on!” A happy thought struck me, and, returning to my position on the stage, I looked in the direction where the Marquis should have entered, and then at the situation he ought to have occupied on the stage, and continued my part by saying, “Marquis, *who should be standing there,*” &c., &c. The audience burst forth into a yell of delighted merriment at the device. I continued to address the invisible Marquis, making his answers (which were supposed to be heard by my ears alone) known to them by my interpretation. Every few words excited a fresh shout of laughter, and the play concluded as brilliantly as though our absent Marquis had been present in the most humorous shape.

On the last night of my engagement a rather amusing scene took place at the stage door of the theatre, where the carriage was waiting to take me home. On



emerging into the street, we found such a crowd assembled that it was with difficulty that the gentlemen who escorted me could force a way to the carriage. This throng had gathered to witness my departure, not merely because I had become a favorite in Dublin, but because I was an American, and America had succored Ireland in her hour of need. They grasped my hands as I passed, seized my dress, crying out, "God bless you, mee lady!" "The Lord give you prosperity!" "America! America's the blessed land!" There were a number of women in the crowd, some of them with infants in their arms. These pressed upon me, crying out, "Look at the baby, mee lady! Take a look at mee baby!" and, "Let the little girl kiss your hand," &c. I was forced to stand some minutes in the street, complying as well as I could with their requests. They hemmed me in so closely, that to reach the carriage was an impossibility; and the gentleman whose arm I held lifted his cane to strike some of the poor creatures. But they drew back at my request, though they did not seem inclined to do so before the threatened blows. After I was seated in the carriage, we discovered that Mrs. Renshaw had been lost in the crowd. She was not recognized as my attendant, and consequently got separated from me, to her great dismay. She was unmercifully jostled about, and nearly trampled under foot. One of the gentlemen who accompanied me went in search of her. She was found with some difficulty; and even then it was only by proclaiming who she was that he could induce the crowd to make way and let her pass. We drove off amidst cheers and shouts of "God bless you!" "Long life to you!" which never ceased while the carriage was in sight.

I received several complimentary letters and other tokens of esteem during my stay in Dublin, and I formed some delightful acquaintances. I am their debtor for numerous hospitalities and courtesies.

Every morning's mail brought me a note from the invalid in London. Very often I had a second note in the evening. Every mail took back a note to him, with a supply of newspapers. He had wonderfully revived, and wrote in excellent spirits. The accounts of my Dublin successes cheered him; and he derived great amusement from sketches of the individuals with whom I became acquainted and the narration of various incidents. I quote a few passages from his daily letters to show the happy and thankful spirit in which they were penned:—

“Your letter rejoiced my heart and filled me with gratitude to Heaven — all seems so prosperous. I, too, am unusually well and strong to-day.”

“How much you seem to be favored by the press, and by having your exertions appreciated and rewarded! Heaven surely favors you, and me through you.”

“I am so comfortable this morning after a good night's sleep, and the cheerful sun shining so brightly in the room, and your sweet water lily hanging over me, and the portrait of your dear self on the other side of the painting of St. John!”

“I know that it will make you happy to learn that, for the first time since you left me, I have been able to sit up and read; which I have just now been doing, to my infinite delight, for an hour and a half. Providence be thanked for all its mercies! This is more than I expected would happen for some weeks.”

“Last night was the best yet. I am lying upon your sofa, having been placed there by a nephew of Mr. M——ll’s, who is very kind, and an excellent substitute for our good Charlie.”

“Davenport brought me a beautiful pot of lilies of the valley, in full bloom, this morning. Your letter of Sunday was a great source of pleasure and delight to me, so that I am as comfortable as can be to-day.”

“I look forward to many an hour’s amusement upon your return, from the various scenes and events that have happened to you. My good doctor is all attention to me, and watches me with the greatest care. Mrs. E——n is delighted that her sister Mrs. R—— suits you so well.”

The contented tone of these letters, and the favorable change which my London friends assured me had taken place, once more cheated me into the belief that his recovery was possible — I even dared to believe *probable*. In his latter letters he entreated me to accept an offer which I had received to act a fortnight at Newcastle upon Tyne, and then to visit Scotland. I unwillingly consented to the former request; and my faithful attendant and I left Dublin with our faces turned towards Newcastle, instead of to London, as I earnestly desired.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*Recrossing the Channel. — Night on Deck. — Arrival at Liverpool. — Carlisle. — Newcastle upon Tyne. — Mail Disappointments. — First Rehearsal. — Its Interruption. — The three Letters. — Sad Announcement of the Third. — Mr. Davis. — Sudden Return to London. — The Death Bed. — Last Hours. — A Dying Look. — The peaceful passing away. — Hospitalities. — A Flower-decked Grave. — Floral Offerings of Friends. — Farewell Letters. — Last Wishes. — The last Adieu. — Provincial Tour. — Memoir by Bayle Bernard. — Return to America.*

It so chanced that we recrossed the channel in the *Iron Duke*, which three weeks before had conveyed us to Kingston. It was a glorious moonlight evening, and the boat seemed to plough its way over a sea of molten silver. We spent the greater portion of the night on deck. A long, wooden bench, which bore some relationship to that plank which had "a soft side," served for a couch. An old gentleman who was pacing the deck, after passing us once or twice, deprived himself of his voluminous woollen cloak, and spread it over me. I looked up to remonstrate, but the attempt was useless; something in his action seemed to say that he had a daughter at home. When I woke from a dreamy slumber I found a couple of overcoats folded carefully over my feet, and Mrs. R—— was similarly protected. We could only divine whence they came by singling out certain shivering figures that walked rapidly to and fro in the moonlight minus the comfortable outer garment.

Towards morning the cold became so intense that we were obliged to take refuge in the close cabin, and encounter the seasick consequences. We landed at Liverpool soon after daylight, and in about an hour, during which I wrote to London, took the train for Carlisle. At four o'clock we reached Carlisle, remained half an hour, then proceeded to Newcastle, where we arrived at eight on Friday evening. That night we passed at a hotel, and early the next morning went in search of apartments. To our wonder and gratification, they were found almost as readily as those in Dublin, and again seemed mysteriously prepared for our reception through the agency of the invisible *avant courier* before mentioned.

Our first care was to send to the theatre for letters. There was one from the invalid at home, dated Thursday morning and Thursday night. It was written in the same placid and hopeful strain as all the others which had cheered me during my absence. I noticed but one difference; the writing was singularly uneven, and on some lines there were but two words, as though they were traced by one who did not see, but only guessed at the space. This had, doubtless, been the case. Nothing in the tone of the letter betrayed a feebler state of body than usual.

On Saturday there was no letter. It was the first day since I left London that had brought no tones from the voice at a distance. Anxious pulses began to beat. Their throbbing was painfully quickened when Sunday came and went and brought no news. Monday morning I sent to the post office. The mail had not yet arrived—it was very late that day; and we learned that the mail due on the day previous had missed altogether.

This accounted for my having no letters. I should certainly have two that day.

With renewed hope I went to my first rehearsal in that strange, cold, vast theatre — one of the largest in England. Mrs. Renshaw accompanied me. As we were passing the box office, on our way behind the scenes, the doorkeeper, seeing strange faces, inquired, "Is that Mrs. Mowatt?" On receiving my answer, he replied, "I have a great pile of letters for you, ma'am; there are several back mails this morning;" and placed a large package of epistles in my eagerly-extended hands.

Very hurriedly I glanced over them to select the well-known writing. It was not there. Again I looked through the gathering mists that clouded my sight; there were many familiar hands, but one was missing. A note, in Mr. Davenport's writing, attracted my attention; that must give me information. I broke it open, and turned to the last lines before I had courage to glance at the first. They reassured me — the letter was dated Friday, and had probably been posted too late for that day's mail. He was paying Mr. Mowatt a visit, and wrote in his stead. The latter seemed somewhat weaker than usual, too weak to manage a pen — and, besides, he appeared inclined to sleep.

As I looked up from the letter, I perceived that the manager, Mr. Davis, was waiting to address me. Several of the company had assembled without my noticing them, and were scanning the stranger with inquisitive eyes. After exchanging a few words with Mr. Davis, whom I had seen but twice before, I inquired if I were delaying rehearsal.

"It is past the hour," he replied, "and every body is

here; but if you wish to read your letters——” I interrupted him with, “I have read the only important one, and will not detain you.”

He was leading the way to the stage, and I following. The package of letters seemed to burn my hands, and I glanced over them again. My eye caught sight of another note in Mr. Davenport’s writing, and above the address the startling word, “immediate.” I paused, too much alarmed to apologize to my conductor, and hastily tore open the letter. It was dated Saturday, and, after a gentle preparation, intimated that he feared Mr. Mowatt was worse. Mr. D——, with other friends, had passed the day at his bedside—he did not appear to suffer, but was very feeble. There was a P. S., dated 4 o’clock, stating that no change had taken place up to that hour. The writer’s duties at the theatre, he said, would force him to leave at six.

I was folding the letter as composedly as I could, when I noticed a third letter in the same hand; and upon that, too, was the terrible word, “immediate.” I opened it—the date was Sunday morning. It was strange that I should have opened them accidentally in the order of their dates. The first lines were all I read—they had told me the worst. The voice of consoling angels whispered, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him!”

I hardly know what took place; but I remember the gentle ministrings of the considerate manager and of my weeping attendant. As soon as I was able, we returned to our lodgings.

My package of epistles contained numerous letters of condolence, and several most pressing invitations from intimate friends, offering the hospitalities of their

roofs. I accepted that of the friend who had been the most tried — the most devoted to him who was gone — a friend whose wife, daughters, son, and nephew, as well as himself, had each in turn watched over and cheered the departing spirit through its long but gentle struggles to be disinthralled.

Mr. Davis wrote to him, and made all arrangements for my return to London. We started at six o'clock the next morning. The attentive manager took charge of us to the station, provided for our comfort on the road, and performed every office that the kindest of hearts could dictate.

We arrived in London late in the evening, after a journey the sadness of which I need not describe. For the next few weeks I took up my residence with friends now doubly endeared.

From the faithful nurse, Mrs. E——n, I received a minute account of the last days and last hours which I had not been permitted to witness.

On Thursday night the then sinking invalid wrote to me for the last time. On Friday he was unusually feeble, but composed as ever. Mr. Davenport passed the day with him, and he gave various directions with his habitual clearness and precision. On Saturday morning he seemed slightly worse, and inquired, with considerable anxiety, if the postman had not made his rounds. A little before ten o'clock the daily missive was placed in his hands. It was written at Liverpool during the hour that we stopped on our way to Newcastle. He opened the note, and held it a long time before his eyes without turning the page; he appeared unable to see the words. After a while he looked up at Mrs. E——n, who was standing beside him, and, holding out the note, said, in



a faint voice, "Read me Lily's letter!" They were the last words he ever spoke.

She took the letter and read. When she had finished she looked at him; his face, she says, had strangely changed; it was white as marble, and quite rigid. She spoke to him, but he did not answer; she bent her head, and felt his breath upon her cheek. Then she thought he was sleeping. She sat beside him to watch; but the strange expression, the "death look in his face," as she termed it, terrified her; and she sent a messenger for Mr. Davenport, and another for Mr. M——ll, the friend whom I mentioned above. They came, the latter with his wife and daughter. Mr. M——ll tried to rouse the slumberer, and, fancying that he had partly succeeded, took the open letter that lay beside him and read it aloud, to attract his attention; but the heavy eyes closed again, and gave no sign of intelligence. Mr. Davenport brought the doctor; he examined his patient, and told the assembled friends that the parting hour was at hand. Then they gathered silently and solemnly around the bed, and waited for the angels of death to free the ransomed spirit. Another friend joined them, and sat with the hand of the dying clasped in hers. He never spoke and never moved until just before sunset. Then suddenly he opened his eyes; they rested for a moment upon the portrait which he had ordered to be hung at the foot of his bed, and at the pot of lilies, in full bloom, standing beneath it; a smile full of angelic radiance for an instant played upon his lips; his eyes closed again, and almost immediately opened, fixed, glazed, expressionless; the mortal casket was untreasured; he was no longer there.

"His spirit passed away sweetly and gently, like the

slumbering of an infant; the change was scarcely perceptible to those around." So wrote one of the friends who witnessed his release, adding, "I have beheld his mortal remains placed in the coffin; and his countenance is so placid, looking as I have seen him often in his sleep in latter days."

In one of the loveliest corners of Kensall Green Cemetery, where bending trees wave their green canopy over his grave, and a richly-broidered mantle of flowers covers the earth, lie his mortal remains. No flattering falsehood is graven upon his tombstone, but a simple epitaph, ending with the inspired words which so distinctly apply to such as he: "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, finds watching!"

Other hands besides my own have hung wreaths upon that tombstone, and laid choice bouquets upon that flower-covered grave, in token of remembrance. The latest offering was a basket of moss, filled with *immortelles* of various hues; and on the handle was woven, in white flowers, the last name that was uttered by his lips.

In a previous chapter I spoke of a trunk which he pointed out to me as containing letters. I found *three*, enclosed in each other, and addressed to me. The first related entirely to business subjects. It carefully explained matters which my absence of business knowledge would have rendered difficult of comprehension.

The second contained various wishes, with which he urged my compliance. One was, that I would resume my profession, and resist the entreaties of relatives or friends to abandon the stage until certain objects were accomplished. Another entreaty was, that, should he die during the winter season, I would not leave Eng-

land until the ensuing summer, as the change of climate would inevitably prove injurious to my health. Other wishes referred to the care and education of the little Greys, now wholly left under my charge. Other requests are not of a nature to be mentioned here; every one was dictated with a view to promote my welfare. If any desire has remained uncomplied with, it is because the fulfilment was not possible.

The third letter was a farewell, written with deep emotion; the outpouring of a loving and exalted spirit; a letter full of thankfulness, full of tenderness; gratefully reviewing the past, and assuring me of his preparation for the future. The rocks of doubt, upon which he had once been stranded, had melted in the broad and living waters of Truth, whose waves dance upon the shores of a glorious eternity. That farewell letter belongs, perhaps, to these memoirs, which are written at his request. I have read the valued document again and again before I could come to a decision on this point. Although I have allowed it to be perused by many friends, I feel its language too sacred to be recorded where cold and worldly eyes have the right to read. I may be wrong in this conclusion; but I yield to an instinct which I have not strength to overcome.

I passed six weeks at the residences of various friends, and then prepared to resume my profession. Compliance with Mr. Mowatt's last wishes compelled me to remain in England until summer commenced. London was now full of distressing associations; I therefore made engagements for a tour in the provinces, to occupy the months which must pass before I could return to my own country, my own family. I travelled from city to city, accompanied only by Mrs. Renshaw,

remaining a few weeks in each town, and acting every night; if that could be called *acting* which was but a soulless imitation of my former stage imbodiments. I could only coldly copy what I had done spontaneously in more inspired moments. I lost, for the time being, all power of original personation.

We visited Newcastle, Leeds, Hull, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool. The gentlemanlike conduct of Mr. Davis caused me to return to Newcastle and fulfil the engagement which had been so painfully broken in upon. I would gladly have avoided that city; but I felt bound to secure him against loss. Newcastle was, consequently, the first town in which I reappeared.

In Manchester I acted in the very theatre where I had made my first English *début* — but under what different circumstances! As I sat *alone* at the manager's table, through the long dreary rehearsals, the incidents of the past four years, many and many a time, passed in visionary review before me.

My intercourse with the Rev. Mr. Smithson and his wife was renewed. Highly prized their friendship had been years before; but it was at this period an inestimable boon.

During my engagement in Liverpool I was supported by Mr. Barry Sullivan, one of the most gifted performers on the English stage. Armand was produced in every city, and always with success. In Liverpool Mr. Davenport enacted his original part on my benefit night. The managers of the Haymarket Theatre accorded him this privilege for one evening only. He arrived in Liverpool — where he is a great favorite — in time for the performance, and left the next morning to act in London at night.

It is somewhat strange, that, in spite of the sad events related in this and the several previous chapters, I left England with the reputation of a *comic* rather than a tragic actress; so little may the public and private history of an actor be in accordance. Just before my departure, a memoir of me was written by Bayle Bernard, author of the *Broken Heart*, the *Passing Cloud*, &c., which concludes with the following paragraph:—

“While Mrs. Mowatt has a tenderness and pathos that render her Imogen and Viola scarcely equalled in our memory, there is such an entire adaptation of her whole person, look, and spirit to the blander sphere of *comedy*, *that we cannot but feel it is her true one*. It is marked by an enjoyment that shows at once it is most natural to her, however her tears and gentleness may charm us to the contrary. But her comedy has its distinction — *we think it peculiarly Shakspearian*, owing to that thrill of poetic feeling which winds through all its passages. That mixed exposition of the ideal and the true, which stamps all Shakspeare’s writings as the profoundest insight into man, receives the happiest illustration in the genius of Mrs. Mowatt. Sensibility and mirth are ever neighbors to each other; and our fair artist well interprets what our best poet has so well divined. In the comedy of modern life she has unquestionable merits; but if it impress us the less forcibly, it is on account of its lower grade, which limits expression. It is in Beatrice and Rosalind that she must be witnessed to be esteemed; equalled by some in art, and surpassed in force by many, *she alone* has that poetic fervor which imparts to them their truth, and makes our laughter ever ready to tremble into tears.”

During my engagement in Liverpool I was joined by Mr. S——h, a valued brother-in-law, who had just arrived from America. I passed a few weeks in London, bidding adieu to cherished friends, and, under my brother-in-law’s protection, set sail for America, accompanied by Mrs. Renshaw. We embarked on the 9th July, 1851, in the steamship *Pacific*, commanded by Captain Nye.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*Accident on board of the Steamship Pacific. — Midnight Scene in the Cabin. — Arrival in New York. — Adventurous Night Journey to Ravenswood. — Rousing the Slumberers. — Meetings in the dark. — Our second Mother. — The general Home. — Reunion of the ten Sisters. — A Christening. — Engagement at Niblo's Theatre. — Acting and its Necessities. — Anecdote of Mr. Macready. — Mademoiselle Mars. — Conversation with Planché, the Dramatist. — His Advice. — Professor Hows. — Dramatic Studies. — Engagement at Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. — Letter from His Honor the Mayor of St. Louis, J. M. Kenneth. — Complimentary Benefit declined. — Proposed Christmas Festivities in Philadelphia. — A Family Gathering.*

OUR voyage, of thirteen days' duration, was not accomplished entirely without accident. About two o'clock, one morning, a terrible crash suddenly dispelled the dreams of every slumberer. The sound was three times repeated, and the ship quivered and groaned as though her timbers were being rent asunder. Immediately afterwards all motion ceased — she had been arrested in her course. Then came the noise of hurrying feet and indistinct ejaculations of horror, and a general rushing of the ladies into the cabin, and of the gentlemen to the deck. Mrs. Renshaw opened our state-room door to inquire what had happened. A terrified stewardess answered, as she flew by, "O, dear! I don't know. But the ladies had better dress — I am afraid we are going down!"

Silently and rapidly we made our toilets and joined

the group in the cabin. It was a strange sight that crowd of bewildered faces just startled from sleep, and stranger the odd toilets, the bonnets hurried on over nightcaps, the half-dishevelled hair, the not-to-be-described mingling of night and day costumes. In spite of the white terror that spread itself over many a countenance, every lady present maintained a quiet bearing; while some of the braver sex (so it was reported) rushing frantically to the deck, attempted to cut loose the lifeboats, in the hope of saving themselves. The captain was forced to station several of the crew where they could prevent this act of madness.

It was full half an hour before intelligence was brought below of the precise nature of the accident. During this period the steamer lay perfectly still. We then learned that in backing suddenly from a dangerous approach to certain rocks, upon which she would inevitably have been wrecked, one of the engines had been shivered to pieces. Its instantaneous dismemberment had occasioned the convulsive quivering of the vessel and the thunder-like reports. There was no longer any danger. The larger portion of the passengers returned quietly to their berths. Some few could not recover from the excitement, and remained watching. We were amongst the former. After a few hours the Pacific proceeded on her course with but one engine. We had already made (if I remember rightly) two thirds of the voyage.

On the thirteenth night, at about eleven o'clock, we reached New York. It would have been wise, perhaps, to have remained on board until daylight; but my brother-in-law and I could not make up our minds to the delay. We were too impatient to behold the be-

loved ones assembled to greet us beneath our father's roof. How to make the journey to Ravenswood, Long Island, was the next question. We had six miles to travel over the worst kind of roads. The night was dark, but for a few faint stars that now glimmered, now disappeared. We could not hope to reach Ravenswood until long past midnight, — my father's household would then have retired to rest, — but we could not persuade ourselves to postpone the joyfully anticipated meeting until morning. A coach was loaded with our baggage, and we started. The roads were newly made; and every few moments the carriage sank down into a deep rut, or rose sidewise over a high mound of earth. After several narrow approaches to an upset, we alighted from the carriage, and walked, ankle deep in mud, over the worst portions of the road. When Mrs. R—— and I resumed our seats, my brother-in-law mounted the box, and himself took the reins as the only means of guarding us from the perils of an overturn.

It was past one o'clock in the morning when my ears were greeted with the glad sound, issuing from the coach box, "Look out, sister! I can just see your father's house behind those pine trees."

The rumble of our heavily-laden carriage broke loudly upon the stillness of the night as we drove up to the door. No other sound was audible, and not a light visible in the silent house. Those within had evidently given up watching for us, except in their dreams. I rang the bell loudly, and my brother-in-law shouted beneath the windows. In an instant an answering cry of joy echoed from within, and we heard the pattering of nude feet, and the sound of a loved voice, that called out, "Wake up! wake up! They have come!" The



key turned rapidly in the lock — the door flew open — clasping arms were about me — and a heart beat strongly against mine — in the dark I could not tell whose ; but I knew it was that of a sister. We were both mute from joy, so that I could not recognize her from her voice. Other arms received me as hers were loosened ; and I could only say, “ Who is it ? Is it Emmie ? Is it May ? Is it you, Jule ? ” My brother-in-law sought for his wife in the dark, and accidentally greeted one of the sisters in her place, which caused great merriment. By some accident there was not a light in the whole house, and in the confusion no matches could be found. Fortunately the travelling satchel which I carried on my arm contained a small box of wax tapers used for sealing letters. With these we struck a light, and made visible the group of white-robed figures that now conducted me to our father’s chamber. He had been roused by the unexpected uproar, and began to divine its meaning. There was joy enough in that meeting to make amends for all past sorrows. From that hour the “ shadows, and eclipses, and dark tides ” began to roll from my spirit.

After the first greeting, — the first hurried questions and answers, — sisters, who had become mothers during my absence, lifted rosy slumberers from their cribs and trundle beds to exhibit them with fond pride. And my father bade me look at the two little sisters born after I left — specimens of infantine loveliness which it would have been difficult not to admire.

I have not before mentioned that two years after we lost our mother (which sad event took place when I was sixteen) our father was united to Miss Julia Fairlie, of New York, daughter of Major James Fairlie, a distin-

guished officer of the revolutionary army. Such a striking contradiction was given to the old maxim that condemns step-mothers in the person of our second mother, that her harmonious life ought almost to take away the reproach that attaches itself to that much-maligned class. The loadstar of her gentleness had attracted to itself the affections of all her husband's children — all their hearts

“Perforce

Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved  
And girdled her”

with love. She contributed four most sweet additions to our already extensive sisterhood. At the period of my return, the youngest, our “last rose of summer,” as we nicknamed her, was little more than a year old; the next in age was three years.

There was very little sleep in my father's house that night; but there was a great deal of what was better and more refreshing, even to the wornout travellers.

Though we used to say that the paternal mansion had the India rubber capacity of the paternal heart, expanding to give each new comer a welcome place, my father's house could not quite accommodate all his numerous children and the shoots from their branches. One sister was obliged to sleep at a hotel near. She had not heard of our arrival. Early the next morning my sisters and I went to see her. Since we parted she had worn bridal flowers and clasped an infant to her heart. When we approached her lodgings she was just leaving the house with her bright-eyed baby in her arms. As I ran towards her, in advance of the others, she did not recognize me, but started when I spoke, exclaiming,

"Anna! It isn't possible! I was wondering what strange lady the girls had brought with them."

I was no longer the pallid, fragile, sickly-looking being whom she had last embraced. The healthful change wrought by the English climate was like a metamorphosis.

We now lacked but one sister, our eldest, to make our band complete. She came from New York with her two Cornelia treasures — riches bestowed since I last beheld her. Was it the *couleur-de-rose* hue of excitement and joy through which I gazed that made me imagine, when the little flock were grouped together in the drawing room, I had never beheld such an assemblage of beautiful infant faces?

It was five years since the sisters had all been gathered from their scattered homes in the general home — for all who had reached womanhood had also entered wifehood. We sat down at my father's table, ten daughters and two sons — two were at a distance. Two of either sex were in the spirit land. The christening of the little Florence and Virginia, our youngest sisters, took place shortly after my arrival. And my father, when he walked into the village church at Ravenswood, where the ceremony was performed, was followed by twenty-two of his own descendants.

I only left New York for a brief visit to Greenfield Hill, to see my young charges, the little Greys. I found them fulfilling my hopes and exceeding my expectations.

On the 19th of August, 1851, I commenced my professional engagements at Niblo's Theatre. The audience at Niblo's is, in a measure, composed of that portion of the community who are lovers of the drama, yet do

not frequent theatres — I should say theatres where certain abuses are countenanced. It is an audience distinguished for purity of taste, though not versed in conventional criticism. There is no craving after unnatural excitement — nothing *blasé* about them — but a freshness and enthusiasm, and a keen sense of enjoyment, to which it is a delight to minister. The theatre itself was built during my absence, and is a very magnificent one.

The theatre-going public are too familiar with the circumstances which attended my *début* after my long sojourn in a foreign land for me to dwell upon the hearty welcome bestowed by my countrymen, the thronged houses with which they honored me through the whole of my engagement, and the overflowing benefit with which it concluded.

At this period I fixed a time in my own mind when I would retire from the profession. But until that epoch arrived, I determined, by close application to the study of my art, to win the highest distinction to which my abilities, in their full cultivation, would entitle me.

✓ Acting is not a matter of mere *intuition*. The power of conception comes long, long before the faculty of executing with thorough success — a success which satisfies the true artist *himself*, and is not measured by the amount of applause he wins — applause which may be dealt out by judicious or injudicious hands — which may oftener be called down by “a trick of the stage” than by a delicately beautiful conception.

✓ The young actor who supposes that, alone and unguided by the maturer judgment of one who can show him to himself by reflection as in a glass, — as “others

see him," and as no man sees his own image, — he can arrive at the highest degree of excellence, commits a great error. The art of interpreting "the mighty masters" correctly, and embodying their conceptions forcibly, faithfully, and brilliantly, is the study of a life — ever progressive, and demanding as devoted application as the study of sculpture, painting, music, or any of the most difficult arts.

It is related of Mr. Macready, that, after enacting Hamlet hundreds of times, he refused to attend a dinner party, composed of the friends whom he most delighted to meet, because the *rôle* of the Dane required more study, new reflections, fresh analysis. The studies of Mrs. Siddons never ceased. It is narrated of Made-moiselle Mars, that when a friend commented upon her admirable personation of Juliet at sixty, she replied, "*Si j'avais ma jeunesse, je n'aurais pas mon talent.*" Through studies not relinquished at sixty years of age she had attained her dramatic perfection.

Before I left England, a conversation with Mr. Planché, the distinguished playwright, first impressed upon my mind the importance, to the dramatic artist, of incessant application. He took a friendly interest in my successes. His words were, "You must not think that because you have made this London hit, and have reached your present position in so wonderfully short a time, that you have nothing more to learn. You will not abandon your studies? You are not vain enough to suppose that you would not be benefited by reading daily with some old actor who has made the stage the study of years, and has discovered how difficult it is to convey to an audience that which it is easy to conceive in the closet?"

I answered what I thought; and the answer pleased him. He counselled me to read with a celebrated English elocutionist, who had once been an actor, to compare opinions with him, especially as regarded Shakspearian characters, and then to form my own personations neither on his nor any model. I forget this gentleman's name. It was one with which I was not familiar. I attempted to follow Mr. Planché's advice; but the elocutionist whom he recommended chanced to be seriously ill. Mr. Planché then suggested my reading with Miss Kelly, who had retired from the stage. I was on the eve of entering into an engagement with this eminent lady when my own indisposition prevented.

I mentally stored up Mr. Planché's remarks, and determined to act upon his advice whenever occasion offered; for I deeply felt my own responsibilities as an artist. I left England, however, without carrying my intentions into execution. On my return to America, while pondering over the counsels I had received from so high a source, I remembered my former friend, Professor Hows, of Columbia College. Of his critical acumen, his elocutionary powers, his talents for analyzing dramatic creations, there could be no question. He had made the imbodiment of language — the uttering of words so as to make them express their meaning by the very tone used — the study of a long life. His first impressions of acting were received from the unapproachable Siddons, the finished and classic Kemble, the matchless O'Neil, the elder Kean, and the host of actors of the old school, their contemporaries, besides their whole galaxy of gifted successors. Such a man had surely been educated in a school of experiences that gave his opinions and judgment high claim to re-

spect. I knew also that he possessed a peculiar faculty of transmitting his knowledge; and this is, of itself, an especial talent.

Before I was half through my engagement at Niblo's, I arranged to read and discuss my favorite dramatic personations with Professor Hows regularly every day. I derived equal benefit and delight from this occupation. I found my own perceptions quickened by his; the close analysis of poetic creations called unseen beauties to light, and brought out harmonious elements that eluded more hasty scrutiny. Sometimes we spent three or four hours in the morning dissecting a single play. At night I tested the correctness of his judgment by the effect produced upon the audience.

Henceforward, whenever I visited New York, even sometimes when I was passing through on my way to other cities, and could spare but a couple of days, I resumed my studies, and found that, for the time thus devoted, I was repaid tenfold.

My second appearance in America was at the Howard Athenæum, in Boston, the same theatre in which I bade farewell a few days before I sailed for Europe. The engagement was a long and brilliant one. I next acted in Providence, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, St. Louis. These engagements occupied every night up to the 10th of December.

I had promised to return to Philadelphia by Christmas. My father and all the members of our home circle within reach were to assemble beneath the roof of our brother-in-law, Mr. M——e. Invitations had been issued for a ball, to be given on the 30th; and on that occasion my sisters were to enact *Gulzara*, or the *Persian Slave*, the little drama of Melrose memory,

written in my girlhood. It had been represented during my absence at the residence of one of our sisters in Brookline, near Boston. I had consented to act as stage manager in Philadelphia in "getting up" the play, and directing the costumes, &c., though I would perform no part. The grave realities of my professional life made me unwilling to act in private for amusement.

In St. Louis I was strongly urged to accept a reëngagement; but the impossibility of reaching Philadelphia in time, if I extended my stay, compelled me to decline. Before my engagement drew to a close I received a letter from his honor J. M. Kenneth, mayor of the city, requesting, in the name of the citizens of St. Louis, that I would remain to receive a complimentary benefit. The flattering terms in which the letter was couched rendered the temptation to accept the invitation no inconsiderable one. But the remembrance of the family assemblage who awaited my coming in Philadelphia, and the Christmas festivities with which my absence would interfere, prevented my altering my original resolution. The complimentary benefit offered by the mayor was, consequently, declined.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Waiting of the Steamboat Robert Rogers to take us on board. — Starting at Midnight. — Sudden Freezing of the Ohio River. — Cutting through the Ice. — The Boat frozen in. — A trying Predicament. — Conversation with the old Pilot. — The lunatic Sisters. — Unexpected Escorts. — Female Influence over a Backwoodsman. — Journey in an Ox Cart. — Arrival at Evansville. — Courtesy of a Baltimorean. — Indiana Roads. — White River. — Crossing the partially frozen River on Foot, by Starlight. — Vincennes. — Midnight Travelling on Foot through the Snow. — Major R——'s Joke. — Terre Haute. — A Stage selected through Presentiment. — Overturn of the other Stage. — Serious Accidents. — An aged Couple thrown over a Precipice. — The little Child. — Dayton. — Xenia. — Cleveland. — Alliance. — Salem. — Palestine. — Proverbial American Gallantry. — Pittsburg. — Christmas Day. — A Christmas Fast. — Alleghany Mountains. — Descending inclined Planes. — Outskirts of Philadelphia. — Snowbound. — The Sisters. — A joyful Meeting.*

THE season was the most severely cold that had been known for many years. We had great fears of being "snowed up" somewhere on our way. The journey from St. Louis to Philadelphia is often accomplished in six or seven days. Any detention on the road would interfere with the object of my rapid travelling — the assumption of amateur managerial responsibilities for the New Year's *fête*. The steamboat Robert Rogers was to leave St. Louis on the afternoon of the 10th December. A message to the courteous captain delayed the departure of the boat until night, when my duties at the theatre would be over. I was obliged to appear in

two plays that evening; and though we hurried off without my even making a complete change of attire, it was midnight before we reached the landing. The boat started as soon as we came on board, greatly to the satisfaction of the impatient passengers.

I had been wearied out with nightly personations, and for two days luxuriated in a delightful rest, imprisoned in the narrow little state room, which I never left. The companionship of books and pleasant reveries was a refreshment that can only be appreciated by those who have themselves undergone an amount of physical and mental exertion which ended in complete exhaustion. On the third morning I was roused from a half-waking dream by Mrs. Renshaw's sudden exclamation of "Good gracious! The river is one sheet of ice!"

I sprang up in alarm, and looked out. The river resembled a huge mirror, upon which some gazer had breathed and left a haze over the polished glass. The shores, on either side, were banks of snow drifted into fantastical shapes. The sunlight reflected on their dazzling whiteness almost deprived one of vision. Our boat was cutting bravely through the ice, and still progressed with rapidity. We had just entered the Ohio River from the Mississippi. I forsook my state room for the wheel house, and passed the rest of that day watching the ice as it grew more and more solid, and tormenting the pilots with useless questions. They perceived my restless anxiety, and gave me the comforting assurance that there would soon come a thaw; that we had a good boat, and ice must be pretty deep that we could not make our way through, &c.

The next morning, when I woke, the boat was moving

very slowly, with a pushing, jerking, striking-out motion, as though step by step the steam king were battling every inch of the way with the frost king, and had grown weary in the fight. I went to the wheel house again. The old pilot shook his head at my first question, and I stood beside him silently watching—watching in almost breathless anxiety, as the ice grew thicker and thicker, and more and more closely closed around us. The boat made her way slower and slower, and suddenly stopped. We were frozen in!

“O, what *shall* we do?” I asked of the discouraged old man, as he let go of the helm. “How long may we have to stay here?”

“Well, I’m right sorry for you, I am; but I’m thinking the boat may just have to lie here perhaps three weeks, perhaps a month—there’s no telling; the ice is many a good foot deep, or we’d have made some headway through it.”

“Won’t it perhaps thaw soon?”

“Well, it don’t look inclined.”

“What’s that place on the shore where I see a house?”

“That’s a little spot they call West Franklin.”

“Are there no stages that start from there?”

“Stages! I don’t believe they’ve got any thing better than a cart in the whole place. This is Indiana State. Evansville is the nearest town from which stages start. But stages would be no good to the like of you. You couldn’t travel over these backwoods roads in stages—and at this time of the year! Why, no woman could do it, unless it was an Indian squaw. The stages are sure of being spilled every few miles—dead certain! You don’t know what’s to be gone through; never think

of trusting yourself in them stages, if you know when you are well off."

"But will nobody leave the boat for weeks to come?"

"Some of the men will, *in course*. If they have to walk for it, they'll get on."

Then I'll "*get on*" too, I thought to myself, and returned to my state room to consult with my faithful attendant. She had never seen a frozen river, and I found her gazing in bewildered admiration at the glittering chains of ice that encircled us. There was such a fascination in the sight that she could hardly lament over our trying predicament.

What was to be done? We were not acquainted with a single passenger on board. The captain was in a state approaching despair at the heavy losses he would sustain. He gave us the sympathy which he needed himself, but had no advice to offer, except that we should remain quietly on board until "there came a thaw."

Among the passengers there were two young lunatic sisters. One of them talked, shrieked, or sang from morning until night, and almost infected those around her with frenzy. They were under the care of a keeper, who was taking them to an asylum. Remain on board with these sounds in our ears — this mournful sight daily before our eyes for weeks! The prospect seemed unendurable. Besides, what would the expectant ones in Philadelphia do without their stage director and costumer? The play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet omitted; for the ball and private performance were principally in honor of my return to America. These would have to go on while we were gazing at our ice manacles in our frozen prison on the Ohio.

Another boat had been frozen in near ours. From

that boat came two gentlemen, who sent their cards to me. The elder, Major R——, of Philadelphia, had been presented some six years before. I had seen him but once. He was the father of a family. The younger, Mr. N——, of New York, was acquainted with one of my sisters. They seemed to me Heaven-sent for our rescue and protection. They offered to serve us in any way in their power. I informed them of my determination to reach Philadelphia by a certain day, if it was possible; almost if it was *impossible*. Finding that they could not dissuade me from the seemingly mad attempt, they proposed to become our escorts. Their offer was accepted with undisguised pleasure.

"If I can get your baggage taken by some cart to the next town, can you walk?" asked Mr. N——.

I promptly answered in the affirmative.

"Can you walk eight miles?"

"*Eight* miles! Yes, to be sure."

I would have walked fifty, or have undertaken to do so, to have been put in the way of completing my journey in the desired time. Fortunately I was in vigorous health, and not easily daunted by the prospect of exposure and fatigue.

Several gentlemen were just going on shore to secure any conveyance that could be found. It was very probable that there was not more than one in the place. As they landed from the ice, they all started to run; the first one that reached the house might possibly be the only one who would be accommodated. Mr. N—— and another gentleman outstripped the others, and kept side by side; but the former outwitted his nimble-footed companion, by shouting out, as they approached the

dwelling and perceived its owner, "I engage whatever conveyance you have got."

Mr. N—— brought us word that the "only conveyance" was an *ox cart*! It could carry us and our baggage also; but the man was a true westerner, an independent sort of individual, and could not be persuaded to start that day. He declared that he could not get ready before the morrow.

A day's delay was a serious circumstance in such a journey as we were undertaking.

"Will you come with me and use your influence?" said Mr. N——.

I consented without hesitation. We walked through the uncleared underbrush and through deep snow to the man's log cabin. His sickly-looking wife sat by the fire, busied with the care of three pretty children. I knew the surest avenue (the swift railroad route) to the heart of the "head of a family," and talked to the wife and the little ones, and made them comprehend that a certain ox cart must be got ready that very day. The owner of the log house came in, and before he went out I had been successful in my mission, and the cart was promised. It would be ready in an hour, he said; and it should have a fine pair of strong, lively horses, instead of oxen. We might start at once.

The backwoodsman kept his word. At the appointed time the ox cart stood ready on the steep, snow-covered bank of the river. The trunks were *tossed* (that is the only word to use) in. It was a piercingly cold day, and we obtained the captain's permission to take the cotton-wool "comforters" from our berths for additional protection. There were no seats. I curled myself up on

the floor of the cart; some followed my example; some sat upon the trunks. Three of the party had just nestled in their places when the horses took fright and started off. For a minute or two there was a great chance of our being dashed to pieces over the abrupt declivity that formed the river side of the road. Major R—— caught the horses' heads, and they were stopped and quieted. The owner of the wagon then got in, the major followed, and we drove off, a merry party; for we were released from icy captivity, and our faces were turned towards home. The cold was so intense that my breath froze upon the handkerchief which I held to my lips, and rendered it perfectly stiff. By and by we spied out a barn, and stopped to supply our ox cart with hay for softer seats. Every once in a while, where the road was very uneven, one of the piled-up trunks would be precipitated forward and strike us on the shoulders. The major, in his military capacity, had a constant engagement with our baggage, to protect us against the assaults of these enemies. Mrs. Renshaw was so violently struck in the forehead and eye that she bore a black remembrancer of the "dangers she had passed" for many weeks.

We reached Evansville (which proved to be twelve miles from West Franklin instead of eight) in the evening. Stages were to start the next morning for Vincennes; but every place was taken. Here was another difficulty, and it seemed an insuperable one, inasmuch as any person who would venture on so perilous a journey must have as strong reasons for making his way onward as we had. Mr. C——d, of Baltimore, who had engaged three places, (I never knew a Baltimorean yet who was not a pattern of courtesy,) hearing

of our disappointment, instantly resigned them to us, and hunted out and engaged a small open wagon, in which he proposed to drive the major.

Our gigantic baggage occasioned the next difficulty. No sum of money that we could offer — and we did offer some very extravagant amount — could induce the drivers to take it all upon the stage coach. We had to select out the trunks that were indispensable, and left the rest — not to see them again for months.

We started at daylight in the morning — such a bitter, cold morning! — for Vincennes. The roads were so rough that they seemed to be composed of huge logs placed a couple of feet apart; and our mode of progression was a sudden rising up of the stage, pitching every one backward; then a sudden ducking down of the wheels, throwing the passengers forwards, after having sent them up until many a head made the acquaintance of the roof of the vehicle. Then the coach would sway from side to side, until it appeared impossible that it should not upset, unless it had the faculty of maintaining its equilibrium belonging to an acrobat. Then it would drop down into a deep rut and be fastened there for some minutes. After much fierce struggling of the horses it jolted out again, tossing about every thing and every body inside as though we had been a set of jackstraws in a child's hand.

We reached White River just as the sun was going down and the stars were stealing out in the sky. What an imposing and solemnly beautiful sight that ice-clad river presented! You might have fancied the colossal trees that lined the banks were groups of forest giants, and the branches outspread skeleton arms covered with snow drapery, and the crystalline pendants fingers.



They seemed to be keeping a deathwatch over the white-shrouded earth — which wore a glassy, corpse-like smile, suiting the face of Nature on her bier. It was an interlunar period. The stars looked down from their azure thrones through a tissue of silver mist that spread itself over the heavens. Not a sound broke the deep silence, and we all stood gazing with hushed voices. I would have taken our perilous journey — thus far — merely to have beheld that awe-inspiring, winter picture.

A steamboat had sunk in that river a few days before. It was now thickly frozen over — the ferry boat immovable in the ice — the ferryman ill. There was no house on that side of the stream — no shelter of any kind. To cross the ice on foot, while the gentlemen carried over our baggage, was the only alternative. In the centre of the river ran a line of unfrozen water. *That* was dangerous. It could only be avoided by walking some distance on the edge of the frozen stream, until we came to a narrow bridge of ice, through that centre current, firm enough to bear us. Every now and then there was a suspicious, crackling sound beneath our feet, as though the ice were suddenly giving way; and we stepped lightly and cautiously, and at times tremblingly, when that warning noise fell on our ears. But the strange beauty of the scene almost beguiled us of terror.

There were stages waiting for us on the other side, and we reached Vincennes at eleven o'clock. What a delicious sleep I had that night! But it was of short duration — for we had to be up and dressed by daylight. We were packed closely in the stage coaches again, — so closely that almost all limbs were cramped immovably, — and started for Terre Haute. The roads were

worse than ever, and we made up our minds to the *necessity* of encountering an upset. Towards evening one of the gentlemen informed us that our driver, "while watering his horses' mouths," had been sympathetically seized with a sudden thirst, and, in consequence, could not now be trusted in the box without a companion. Our situation became more perilous than ever. The road was but just visible in the starlight. About midnight the stage suddenly sank into a deep gully. The gentlemen were all obliged to descend and assist in restoring its position, by means of rails taken from the nearest fence. With great difficulty the lumbering conveyance was once more elevated.

Major R—— made a good joke on the occasion. He had been in the habit of writing articles on the theatre — its uses, abuses, &c.; and turning to me, he remarked, "I have been trying for years past to *elevate the stage*; and I have just succeeded, *with you upon it!*"

A little farther on the road grew so dangerous that to remain inside of the coach would have been foolhardy. We all alighted and walked through the snow, sometimes ankle-deep, sometimes knee-deep, for a long distance. I was wrapped in an odd variety of protecting garments — shawl, cloak, coat, blanket; but they were not proof against the "icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind," for I felt as if suddenly deprived of nose and ears, and the air seemed to turn to thin ice between my lips — yet we trudged merrily onward.

We reached Terre Haute at four in the morning, and started at six for Indianapolis, arriving late in the evening without accident.

At daylight we were to start for Xenia. Two stages

were preparing to leave at the same time. I was standing at the door when the drivers commenced shouldering the baggage. Yielding to an impulse which I did not comprehend, and which appeared to me simply a whim, I said to one of the men, "Put my baggage upon *that* coach; I am going in *that*;" pointing out the second coach.

There was not the slightest obvious difference in the coaches; yet I strongly preferred one to the other.

"Why not go in the first coach?" asked one of our escorts, remonstratingly; "we shall get on faster."

"I don't know why — I fancy this one," was my reasonless answer. I could give no better.

The first stage kept on a few paces ahead of us for some hours. We were traversing a very narrow road, and came to a place where on one side of the high bank was a frozen river, and on the other side a precipice of thirty feet. An aged man was driving his wife in a cart from the opposite direction. The driver of the first coach, in making a careless and violent attempt to pass him hastily, brought the two conveyances in collision. The cart with the venerable couple was thrown off the precipice — the stage upset over the bank into the frozen river!

Our coach immediately stopped, and the passengers ran to the assistance of the unfortunates. It was a fearful sight to behold that poor old man lifted up, apparently in a dying state. His wife, too, was much injured, if we might judge from her groans and lamentations as she was carried up the bank. The driver of the coach had his skull fractured, and was borne to a cottage near. Happily, there were no women in the

coach, — indeed, we met none in our whole journey, — but there was a little girl about three years old. She had not received even a bruise. The hardest natures present involuntarily softened, when, as her frightened father caught her up, she looked with sweet serenity in his face, and said, “Father, I’m not hurt!”

He was a widower; and, as he clasped her tightly in his arms, he murmured, “Thank Heaven! for I couldn’t have helped committing murder if you had been!”

It seemed strange that, without a conscious reason, I had refused to enter the very coach that met this accident.

None of the passengers were seriously injured. They mounted upon our already heavily-laden vehicle; and, travelling at a snail’s pace, we reached Dayton at night. Soon after sunrise we started for Xenia, and from thence for Cleveland, where we arrived that night. In the morning we exchanged our jolting stage coaches for the railway cars, which took us to Alliance by two o’clock. But at Salem we had to encounter the perils of staging again, as the only means of progression. We reached Palestine late at night, and with great difficulty found shelter. We were indebted for it at last to that prompt gallantry, characteristic of Americans, which induced gentlemen already provided with lodgings to surrender them for our accommodation. Every place of refuge was thronged with travellers, who, like ourselves, had been snowbound, on rivers or railroads.

The next day we left Palestine by railroad, and reached Pittsburg at night. The morning after was Christmas.

We started from Pittsburg at half past six, — again by railroad, — but at half past seven we had once more to resort to stage coaches. There was many a bountiful Christmas dinner eaten that day in our land of abundance ; but our party, after an early and hurried breakfast, tasted no food again until eleven o'clock at night — a Christmas fast instead of a Christmas feast ! Often, on our journey, we had partaken of but one rapid meal during the day. Sometimes we contented ourselves with frozen cheese, and biscuits that were not frozen only because *they could not freeze*. These were the nearest approaches to dainties that could be purchased on the road. They were palatable enough — for nourishment, like all things else, has its fictitious value given by circumstances. The sharp air and the long journey imparted to our frozen cheese and stony biscuits a delicious relish.

At four o'clock we again entered upon the railroad, and made the descent of the nine (I think there are nine) inclined planes, which perilous feat was not accomplished until eleven at night. The sun was setting gloriously as we started, and rendered those Alleghany Mountains, in their glittering snow garments, almost as grandly beautiful as in their lovely spring or gorgeous autumn vesture. I had seen them in all three attires.

We travelled all Christmas night and all the next day, and about nine o'clock on the evening of the 26th reached the outskirts of Philadelphia, just entered the suburbs, and then were stopped ! The train could not approach the station ; embankments of snow had rendered the roads thoroughly impassable.

During our journey of seventeen days I had constantly telegraphed my brother-in-law of the progress

we made over the icebound roads, that the anxious hearts assembled beneath his roof might be relieved. The despatches took nearly as long as we did on their route, and our coming in time for the *fête* was almost despaired of.

We waited as long in the immovable train as my impatient spirit could endure. The cars had stopped not more than a mile from my brother-in-law's house, which was situated in the upper part of the city. No sort of conveyance could be procured. I proposed that we should leave the train and walk. We bade adieu to the elder of our escorts, who had become quite ill from fatigue, and, under the protection of the younger, we once more made our way through the snow on foot. The sheets of ice that covered the streets made pedestrianism tolerably dangerous; but at Vincennes we had purchased thick woollen stockings (such as are used by carmen, &c.) and drawn them over our shoes and overshoes, and they prevented our slipping.

At last the hospitable mansion, which had shone in my mind like a far-off beacon through the long journey, and been seen in every dream that visited my rare slumbers, was in sight! A very gentle ring startled none of the household within. I made a sign of silence to the astonished servant who answered the summons, and opened the door of the drawing room myself. The sisters were sitting around a table at the farther end of the large, brilliantly illuminated apartment. My father and brothers-in-law had gone to the station in hope of our arrival. The group of heads, bended over flying needles, were not lifted at the quiet opening of the door; but at the joyful "Huzza! huzza!" to which I gave utterance, what a sudden turning towards us was there

of glad faces — what springing from seats — what rushings to the door where we stood — what floods of questions — what greetings of delight !

It wanted but three days of the ball. Invitations had been issued some time previous, and enclosed within these was the programme of

“GULZARA,

OR

THE PERSIAN SLAVE ;

WRITTEN FOR PRIVATE REPRESENTATION,

BY

ANNA CORA MOWATT.

TO BE ENACTED BY HER SISTERS.”

What preparations had yet to be made ! — preparations to which the exhausted travellers just arrived were indispensable.

## CHAPTER XXV.

*Retrospection. — The New Year's Fête in Philadelphia. — Gulzara, or the Persian Slave. — Its first Production at Melrose, and the present Representation. — My Father. — The acting of five Sisters. — Changes. — Dr. M——ll's critical Opinion of Gulzara's amateur Representative. — Richmond. — Snowbound again. — A Repetition of Western Experiences. — Baltimore. — Providence. — Boston. — Long Engagement. — Attack of Bronchitis. — Excursion on Horseback. — A serious Accident. — Attending Circumstances. — Untimely telegraphic Despatches. — Illness. — Letter from the Mayor and various distinguished Citizens. — Complimentary Benefit. — The Welcome. — Irrepressible Emotion. — Parthenia. — Wreath of natural Flowers woven on the Stage. — Reengagement in Boston, Cincinnati, and Louisville. — Funeral of Henry Clay. — Emblematical funeral Decorations. — Opening of the Metropolitan Theatre in Buffalo. — Inaugural Address. — An Architect's Attack of Stage Fright. — The Prevalence of Bronchitis amongst Actors ludicrously exhibited at Rehearsal. — Broadway Theatre. — A painful Engagement. — Baltimore. — Presentation of a Fawn. — A Star of Flowers. — Return to Boston. — Southern Tour. — Washington. — Richmond. — Mobile. — New Orleans. — Production of Fashion in New Orleans. — Ill Effects of the Climate.*

WHAT sad mutations, what strange events, had thrown their deep shadows over an existence which had reflected nothing but sunshine, when I wrote that little drama in Paris, for the gratification of my own tastes — when my young sisters and I performed it at Melrose for the amusement of our friends! Well was it that no prophetic visions presaged the future that awaited me! And yet, to that future career, the production and performance of this very play formed a first, easy step of



preparation, unknown, unconscious, yet distinctly *ordered* preparation!

The stage appointments of Gulzara, as represented in Philadelphia, at the mansion of my brother-in-law, were even more unique than ours had been at Melrose. Our scenery for the Melrose representation had been painted in Paris; and yet it could scarcely compare, in tasteful execution, with the counterfeit presentment of groves and gardens which came from the hands of the scenic artist of the Chestnut Street Theatre, whom my brother-in-law employed. The scenes were delineated with a finished delicacy which challenged the most minute inspection. On the drop curtain was admirably depicted a romantic view of scenery on the Rhine. The stage accessories were richer than they could have been in any public theatre; the costuming was strictly correct, and as graceful as it could well be fashioned.

Again our father sat in the centre of the assembled guests to witness the performance of his children. In him, how little outward change was wrought by the years that had flitted lightly over his head since he first smiled approval upon the little drama at Melrose! With the few added snows upon his brow, no vigor had been taken away. His winter, in its evergreen blossoming, was too kindly for frost, and youth had left behind the radiant halo of a fresh and buoyant spirit. By his side sat, as before, our gentle second mother, whose children were now most valuable additions to our domestic dramatic corps.

Again the curtain rose upon Zulieka, and Fatima reclining at her feet. The Zulieka was the same as on the play's first representation; but the sister May, then just budding into girlhood, was now a wife and mother.

In her acting there was more intensity and reality than formerly ; but it had lost none of its unaffected simplicity. Fatima was most sweetly personated by a dear friend.

Gulzara, which I had enacted in other days, was more powerfully imbodyed by my sister Julia, *then* our little Amurath. The precocious child, grown to womanhood, presented one of the rare instances where the promise of a forward spring was fulfilled. Just as she passed the verge of childhood we had decked her as a bride, and she was now a youthful wife and mother.

The boy Amurath of to-night was our young sister Emily, the eldest of the four sisters given us by our second mother. Her Oriental countenance, which Heaven formed amongst those things that need no praising, was even more suited to the Turkish boy than little Julia's had been. Emily was Julia's pupil, as Julia had been mine. The new Amurath acted with a naturalness and spirit which at least approached the personation of her tutor.

The simple part of Katinka was rendered by our little sister Grace (Emily's junior by two years) in a manner which her own name could best express.

Our hostess, my sister Emma, was the dark-eyed Ayesha, and did her best to look excessively malignant and wicked in personating the indispensable villain of the plot — an element not easily omitted in the drama, where the distinctions of light and shade are as essential as in a picture. But our Ayesha created a deeper impression through her penitence than by her revengeful triumphs. Her tears drew tears more readily than her evidently fictitious anger excited sympathy.

Could I assume the tone of the author-critic in re-

viewing the performances of my sisters, and forget for the moment (what I should be most unwilling often to forget) the tie between us, I could give a more adequate description of their personations. Our very kinship throws a restraint over my commendation of what all commended, and prevents my dwelling upon gifts of mind and person which justice would force me to paint in glowing colors had the performers of Gulzara been strangers. But this I may say, that, as I watched their imbodiment of my youthful and imperfect creations, the discomforts and perils of the seventeen days' journey over frozen rivers and mountains of snow faded into insignificance.

During the performance, I overheard Dr. M——ll, of Philadelphia, a critic of indisputable taste, whisper to a friend, "If Mrs. S—— (my sister Julia) were on the stage, Mrs. Mowatt would have to look out for her laurels."

Proud as I felt of my sister's talents, I could not repress a half shudder and a mental exclamation of thankfulness that the happy circumstances by which she was surrounded rendered no event more unlikely than a summons for her to "translate the stubbornness of fortune" to such a use. "Heaven shield her from the weariness and trials of the professional actress, and never let stage dust fall upon her young head, her fresh nature!" was my fervent ejaculation. And I say this, though no one reveres the profession more than I do, or entertains stronger convictions that the vocation of the actor may be made to command respect — may be rendered honorable in the persons of the humblest as of the highest members of the profession.

The representation of Gulzara was succeeded by a

ball; and the occasion was one which many lips have declared would not easily be forgotten.

Soon after the New Year's *fête* the sisters again dispersed, the others returned to their homes, and I resumed my professional duties.

My first engagement this year was at Richmond, Virginia. The ill effects of our hazardous western journey, with its fatigues and manifold exposures to cold, now rendered themselves apparent. I almost entirely lost the use of my voice. But the engagement was an eminently prosperous one; and I yielded to the entreaties of the managers, who begged that I would not allow my increasing hoarseness to cause an interruption. Thus was sown the seed of future bronchitis.

In Richmond we were again "snowed up" — the roads impassable — the rivers frozen. After a week's detention we braved a repetition of our western experiences, and made the journey to Baltimore, partly in stage coaches, and partly in open sleighs. On this occasion, however, we were accompanied by a young nephew, who, having just arrived at the age of transition between youth and manhood, when the spirit of chivalry is newly enkindled in the breast, proved the most energetic and efficient of escorts.

I had promised to revisit Boston and fulfil a long engagement, commencing early in February. It was a city to which I always gladly returned. On my way there I acted a week in Baltimore, and another in Providence. In Boston I performed for four successive weeks, in spite of the most painful hoarseness. It was a sad annoyance to find all high notes suddenly cut off, and to be forced to use sepulchral tones even in light comedy — imparting to Rosalind and Beatrice raven-

like intonations not particularly hilarious. Though, to be sure, Rosalind, in her pedestrian journey to the forest of Arden, might have had her vocal chords injured by inclement weather; and Beatrice, eavesdropping in the bower, might have had her lungs affected at the same moment as her heart. I unwisely disregarded the persuasions of my physician, Dr. C——e, who recommended perfect rest.

I had engaged to appear in New York the beginning of April, and only intended to allow my voice a couple of weeks of repose.

One afternoon, in the middle of March, I proposed to my sister May that we should visit Brookline on horseback. We were both exceedingly fond of equestrian exercise, and had not rode together since the bright days at Melrose, when "Silk" and "Queen Mab" used to bear us over the level roads. She consented; but my artist brother-in-law, Mr. T——n, at whose house I was residing, chanced to be too unwell to accompany us. We were attended by the master of the stables from which our carriages were usually supplied. The horses we rode belonged to a riding school. A heavy snow, just melting, made the roads rather slippery. Nevertheless, we enjoyed an invigoratingly delightful gallop to Brookline, paid a short visit to the sister who lived there, and were returning home in exuberant spirits. Passing up Tremont Road, just as we reached Boylston Street, the horses made a forcible attempt to turn the corner — the street led to their stable. My horse had shied several times on the road, and evinced a tolerably unruly spirit. All three horses now began to prance and grow unmanageable. We could not force them on. Suddenly my horse plunged and reared. We were just

opposite the Winthrop House, and a crowd had by this time assembled. Nobody interfered, as I appeared to be self-possessed, and capable of managing the fractious pony. He reared again and again,—the third time I could feel his feet sliding in the slippery mud,—he lost his equilibrium, and fell backwards directly upon me. I remember the crushing sensation, the lightning-like thought, “I am killed!” and nothing after that until I found myself lying in a parlor, a dense crowd of faces bending over me, and around me a confusion of voices, and of feet running to and fro. I was just wondering whether I was in this world or in a better, when one pale, terrified face, pressed closer than the others, dispelled my doubts: it was my sister’s. I was incapable of moving or of speaking except with great difficulty; but I had sufficient presence of mind to say, “Send for Dr. C——e.” He was my physician, and a valued friend.

It was somewhat singular that two physicians, Drs. B——w and T——d, chanced to be driving by at the moment the accident occurred, and witnessed the double fall. They immediately proffered their aid.

My brother-in-law was quickly apprised of the mishap, with the supplementary information that I was probably killed. The news reporters deprived me of life in the most uncereemonious manner. That very evening telegraphic despatches flew over the country, some announcing that I was dangerously injured, some that I had departed this life. It was through these unexpected channels that the news reached the ears of my father and sisters.

It seemed marvellous — so say the many who beheld the accident — that I was not instantly deprived of earthly existence. But I was only severely crushed,

and received a more troublesome than dangerous injury in the left side—one which Touchstone objects 'to regarding as "legitimate sport for ladies." \* I, speaking from experience, heartily agree with him.

I retained perfect consciousness when I was carried through the streets upon a sofa, beside which walked the two physicians and my brother-in-law. I could hear the trampling feet of the crowd which every moment swelled in number, and I distinguished the constant query of new comers, demanding, "Is she killed?" "Is she *quite* dead?" and the answers, sometimes dubious, sometimes inclining to the affirmative. Once or twice I experienced a strong inclination to contradict my own departure from the body.

Dr. C——e soon arrived, and I was attended by him and Dr. T——d. For six weeks I was confined to my room; but in eight I had almost entirely recovered.

My Boston friends addressed me the following letter, headed by his honor the mayor of the city:—

TO MRS. ANNA CORA MOWATT.

Boston, May 13, 1852.

MADAM: The undersigned, your friends, and friends of the drama, are desirous of offering to you a public expression of your services and your worth in the sphere of dramatic art. To be at once a writer of successful plays and a popular actress is to enjoy a distinction which few can reach. But this is not all that

\* *Touchstone*. But what is the sport, monsieur, that the ladies have lost?

*Monsieur Le Beau*. Why, this that I speak of.

*Touchstone*. Thus men may grow wiser every day; it is the first time that I ever heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies.—*As You Like It*.

can be said of you. You have not bought these honors with the price of better things. You have moved with simple dignity along the slippery paths of praise and success. When we have seen you embodying your own conceptions of tenderness and truth, we have felt that the charm of your performance flowed from the fact that your words and your voice were but imperfect expressions of yourself. And now that you have lately stood on the edge of another life, we feel that we should welcome you back to ours with more cordial greetings and more earnest voices.

The manager of the Howard Athenæum has generously consented to place his house at the disposition of your friends, for the purpose of giving you a complimentary benefit, if agreeable to your wishes, upon such evening of next week as may suit your convenience.

BENJAMIN SEAVER,  
JNO. H. WILKINS,  
SAMPSON REED,  
JOHN P. OBER,  
GEO. S. HILLARD,  
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW,  
E. P. WHIPPLE,  
HENRY T. PARKER,  
P. W. CHANDLER,  
EDW. C. BATES,  
THOMAS LAMB,

E. P. CLARK,  
T. G. APPLETON,  
WM. ED. COALE,  
JOHN WARE,  
HORATIO WOODMAN,  
EDMUND A. GRATTAN,  
A. W. THAXTER, JR.,  
JNO. K. HALL,  
EPES SARGENT  
ROBERT G. SHAW.

I could not read this letter without emotion, but of too mixed a character to be framed into language. The paramount sensation was thankfulness that I had accomplished sufficient in my profession to render my well being a matter of interest—my escape from imminent peril a source of rejoicing to minds whose “good report” was so intrinsically valuable.

I returned an answer expressive of my grateful ac-



knowledgments, (that is, I attempted to express them, but very possibly failed,) and accepted the complimentary benefit.

I requested permission to select the character of Parthenia, in Mrs. Lovell's translation of Ingomar. This was one of my favorite imbodiments. There is an innate delicacy, an unconscious goodness, a depth of feeling, a high-toned sense of right pervading the poet's creation of Parthenia which I found irresistibly attractive. Perhaps, too, I liked the play on account of its thorough exemplification of woman's mysterious influence over the sterner sex.

Somebody has laughingly called Ingomar a covert "woman's rights" drama. I fancy that few men would object to the very obvious right of woman to *Parthenia-ize* without seriously trenching upon their sphere of action.

The complimentary benefit took place on the 21st day of May, 1852. It was one of those occasions which are written on the pages of life's record in golden letters. But when I stood upon the stage before that brilliant crowd, and heard the welcome, — warmer, longer, more heart-emanating, and heart-stirring than it had ever been before, — my self-possession, for the second time since I first trod the stage, wholly forsook me. I think there must have been something melting and overpowering in the atmosphere of that particular theatre; for it was upon that stage, five years before, when I appeared for the last time previous to our sailing for Europe, that I was overcome by a similar ungovernable emotion. And those are the only two instances of irrepressible agitation in my eight years of professional experience. I was heartily vexed with myself; but I suppose there

are moments in the lives of every one when the barrier of self-control is broken through by genuine feeling.

Mr. Wiseman Marshall\* personated Ingomar. During my previous engagements he had rendered the character very popular with the Boston audience. I had enacted *Parthenia* a great number of nights; but I believe the play's repetition awoke no dissenting voice.

In the second act *Parthenia* weaves a garland while she prattles to the savage, who is becoming humanized and *Parthenia-ized* as he watches her. The flowers on that evening were natural ones, abundantly supplied; and I wove a garland of some length, which was sent to a beloved friend whose illness prevented her being present.

After the benefit, I was induced to fulfil another engagement at the Howard Athenæum of a fortnight's duration.

My next appearance was in Cincinnati. I then acted several weeks in Louisville. That city is always associated in my mind with Henry Clay. It was there that I bade him adieu for the last time. And now, when I visited Louisville again, the bells were tolling from every steeple, the streets were draped with black; for Henry Clay's funeral was passing; his mortal remains were on their way to their Ashland resting-place. We were residing at the Louisville Hotel. Our drawing-room window fronted the street. Heavy folds of unrelieved sable were stretched story after story from every window but one, and that one was ours. *There* we hung festoons of white drapery, intermingled with violet bouquets, and a garland of white and purple violets, and ribbons of

\* Mr. Marshall was at this period the manager of the Athenæum.

violet, of black, and of white. The whitely-decked window shone out strangely amidst the surrounding blackness ; and many who knew that it had been decorated by one who loved and honored Henry Clay, and had been to him an object of openly acknowledged interest, asked for an explanation. With our snow-white emblems, flower-mingled, we made an offering to his memory as to that of one who was *still living* ; not sleeping an unconscious slumber for ages, not annihilated, not separated from us forever ; but only translated to a sphere of higher use ; only shut out from us by a translucent gate which we, too, would soon enter : and so we hung our windows, not with the blackness which represents, the darkness that belongs to, the grave, but with symbols of the living freshness, gladness, purity of the new life ; not with the insignia of death, but the tokens of the resurrection ! \*

The ensuing morning the Louisville Journal gave an explanation of our tribute to the memory of Henry Clay.

After this engagement, which ended in July, I returned east to rest during the month of August. My professional labors were resumed in September.

In Buffalo I commenced my engagement on the opening night of the Metropolitan Theatre, newly erected. The opening of a theatre is always a period of great excitement. The gradual completion that looks like incompleteness ; the apparent impossibility, even at the last rehearsal, of accomplishing all that remains to be done ; the jostling activity of the stage carpenters, the rapid painting of the scenic artists ; the perplexity

\* The black ribbons alone indicated the passage through the grave.

of the actors, who cannot hear, through the sound of hammers, their own voices rehearsing ; the flurry of the stage manager ; the flitting to and fro of the architect ; the wondering of all how the new temple of art, awaiting its consecration, will look when lighted up ; the freshness, the bustle, the confusion, — form a combination of stirring elements that diffuse themselves through the whole theatre in the day, and, at night, are communicated to the audience.

In the evening the throng in front of the building became so dense that the doors of the theatre had to be thrown open to admit them while the scaffolding was still upon the stage. The audience were thus made witnesses of a most painful accident. One of the carpenters, in attempting to execute his work as quickly as possible, fell from the scaffolding, and was seriously injured.

The curtain rose upon the members of the company assembled upon the stage. Then was sung the national anthem of "Hail, Columbia!"

At its conclusion I entered and delivered the inaugural address, written by Anson G. Chester, Esq. The audience responded heartily to such passages as the following : —

"To its" (the Drama's) "*good use* we henceforth set apart  
This fair creation of the hand of Art.  
Within these walls shall Virtue ever rule ;  
This be her throne, her altar, and her school !  
Here will we seek her precepts to defend,  
And, while we please, will elevate and mend ;  
So shall the Drama's first intentions find  
A fit translation to the modern mind."

Almost every one of the above lines was interrupted by an emphatic burst of applause ; distinctly showing

what class of performances the public were prepared to patronize.

After the opening address rose a loud demand for Mr. T——e, the architect of the theatre, to whose talents and skill several edifices in New York bear witness. He certainly had erected a theatre in admirable taste, and deserved public thanks. The worthy architect had been apprised that he must acknowledge the kindness of the audience by a few appropriate words — a necessity which caused him great alarm. His mind had been kept on the stretch for many days and nights in superintending the completion of the theatre. He had obtained no rest, and was now thoroughly worn out with excitement and fatigue. After a protracted and clamorous summons the curtain drew back ; Mr. T——e tremblingly appeared, took a couple of steps upon the stage, made several nervous attempts to execute a bow, faltered out, “ Gen-tle-men — *and* — la-a-dies,” staggered back, two steps taking him out of sight, and, panic-stricken, fainted away !

I was completing my toilet for the play, and, hearing the sudden cessation of applause from the audience and a confusion behind the scenes, I feared some new accident had occurred. As soon as I was dressed I hastened to inquire, and received the above relation from the stage manager, Mr. Smith.

The accomplished but timid architect was joked unmercifully about his attack of stage fright. Some of his friends declared that he only fainted because he had accidentally said, “ Gentlemen *and ladies*,” instead of giving precedence to the latter, and terror at the remembrance of “ woman’s rights,” thus rudely infringed, had overpowered him.

After this I fulfilled an engagement in Syracuse. In passing through Boston I acted one night, and engaged to return with the new year. My next engagement was in Philadelphia; but a severe attack of bronchitis rendered its fulfilment impossible.

The disease seemed singularly prevalent in all theatres during that season. I several times assisted at rehearsals where three or four of the actors were so seriously affected that they could not venture to use their voices in the morning. The little power left was reserved for night. At rehearsal they went through the action of the play in dumb show, standing, sitting, kneeling, pacing the stage, crossing from right to left, or left to right, as the business of the scene demanded, but in perfect silence, while the prompter read aloud the words of their parts. It reminded me of the ludicrous game of "dumb orator."

My next engagement, commencing in November, was to take place at the Broadway Theatre. My home in New York was at the residence of my brother-in-law, Dr. T——r. The bronchial affection from which I was suffering had been very much relieved by his medical skill, and I was able to meet my engagement at the time appointed. I opened in Parthenia, and that night used my voice with tolerable facility; but the next, while I was enacting Rosalind, the power of speech left me entirely. - At its *forceful* return, through my strong volition, it seemed as though somebody else's voice had been mysteriously substituted for mine. The engagement thus became an exceedingly painful one. I was urged to complete it, if possible. How I was enabled to do so appears a matter of wonder. All that medical science could effect for me was constantly counteracted

by my nightly exertions. On some evenings the utterance of every sentence was a separate misery. I heartily rejoiced when the engagement came to a close.

In December I had recovered sufficiently to appear in Baltimore. A singular presentation was made to me during this engagement, on my benefit night—that of a young fawn, garlanded with flowers. It was a testimonial from the Fireman's Library Association. The fawn was first taken to my dressing room, and then brought upon the stage during the comedy of the Honey Moon. Lopez delivered it to Juliana in the cottage scene. My new pet followed me about and played his part to perfection. When the Duke and Lopez were conversing, I seated myself upon a footstool beside the table, and the gentle fawn ate out of my hand, varying the feast by munching my curls, greatly to the amusement of the audience. This by-play did not interrupt the dialogue between the Duke and countryman, who occupied the front of the stage.

On the same evening was presented to me (I believe from the same source) the most exquisite floral offering that I ever received. It was a star, about a foot and a half or two feet in height and in breadth, composed of double camelias of various hues, the white predominating. Both sides of the star-bouquet were alike, and the framework on which it was composed was rendered invisible by thickly clustering flowers. It was handed from the boxes to A. W. Fenno, Esq., (who supported me during the engagement,) and placed by him in my arms. The rare beauty and delicacy of the gift gave me much pleasure; but I was especially charmed that the flowers had been woven into the form of one of the chief emblems of that country whose daughter I was proud to be called.

I returned to Boston, according to promise, in January, and acted several weeks. My voice had slightly improved. At times, I could use it without difficulty; but the least nervousness or anxiety was the signal for the departure of every smoother tone.

My southern tour was now to commence. In Washington I appeared for the first time, reëngaging twice. I next performed in Richmond, and then proceeded to Mobile. It was my first visit to that city since my return from Europe. I had abundant and most flattering cause to believe that I had not been forgotten. I rank that engagement amongst those which I shall ever look back upon with truest pleasure.

In New Orleans we had violent storms of rain through the larger half of the engagement. The climate had an injurious effect upon my health, and it was with difficulty that I struggled through the stipulated number of performances. Armand was produced here as in every other city in which I had performed. Fashion was also enacted at the St. Charles Theatre, and repeated several nights, drawing larger houses than any other play. The comedy was exceedingly well acted. The Adam True-man of Mr. Lynn won him high and deserved encomiums. The Snobson of Mr. De Bar more than once overcame my gravity of countenance. I was content to enact Gertrude, as the character obviated all necessity for exertion—exertion which I was nightly becoming more unable to make.



1853  
CHAPTER XXVI.

*Departure from New Orleans. — Memphis. — The Promise to Henry Clay fulfilled. — First Appearance. — Actors' habitual Disregard of physical Ailments. — Instance in London. — Anecdote of Mrs. Glover's last Night. — My second Appearance in Memphis. — Struggle with Indisposition. — Unavoidable Interruption of Play. — Malaria. — Journey eastward. — Acting for Mrs. Warner's complimentary Benefit. — Summer Intentions frustrated. — Serious and protracted Illness. — Removal to Ravenswood. — My Father's House. — The distinguished Dr. M——tt. — Life's Movement in a sick Chamber. — Summer. — Autumn. — Winter's Approach. — The Pine Trees. — Sunsets. — Musings. — Cheerful Visitants to the little Chamber. — A Child's Tribute to a Father. — Anticipated Recovery. — Proposed Farewell of the Stage. — Answer to a Question often asked. — Aristocratic Affectation amongst the Profession. — Passion for the Stage. — A few Words of Warning to the young Aspirant for dramatic Honors.*

WE left New Orleans about the middle of March, 1853, in the queenly Magnolia. The young nephew Stanislas, whom I mentioned in the preceding chapter, was again my gallant escort. In four days we reached Memphis. Six years before I had promised Henry Clay not to pass that city again without appearing there in my professional capacity. I had never travelled on the southern portion of the Mississippi River since the spring when we spent those pleasant days with our distinguished countryman, on board of the Alexander Scott. We arrived in Memphis on Sunday morning. The next evening I made my *début* in Parthenia. I had been ill during my whole stay in New Orleans, and was

now making a desperate struggle with indisposition. I found the audience particularly inspiring — the engagement promised to be brilliant in the extreme. As the curtain fell upon each act of *Ingomar*, I found it more and more difficult to proceed ; but I knew from experience that a strongly concentrated will could master the infirmities of an exhausted *physique*. I invoked to my aid all the mental energy that could obey the summons, and ended the play successfully.

The next night I was announced to appear as Mrs. Haller. If I had been governed by common prudence, — I had almost written *common sense*, — I should not have attempted the performance. But long habit, and the example of others, had accustomed me to make light of physical ailments when they interfered with professional duty. I had seen many an actor walk majestically upon the stage and play a part with thrilling effect, who, the instant he was without the range of the footlights, sank down, unable to speak or to stand, from the excess of acute suffering. I have often seen actors fall into long fits of swooning, and, on recovering, be forced to return to the stage and continue their imbodyments. I remember one occasion in England when an actor, who was personating my father, drew down the displeasure of an audience by his feeble and uncertain delivery of the text. How little they suspected that he was dying at that very moment ! Three days afterwards he had departed this life.

Mrs. Glover's last night in London\* is an instance of the indomitable energy that characterizes the votary of the stage in his conflict with external circumstances.

\* I was in England at the time. The above description was given me by a friend who was present at Mrs. Glover's farewell.

She rose from an illness which her physician had pronounced fatal, to enact Mrs. Malaprop (in the comedy of the Rivals) on the occasion of her farewell of the stage. The instant the performance was over, her temporary strength evaporated. She was incapable of answering the summons of the audience — of crossing the stage before the footlights and courtesying her acknowledgments. At their clamorous demand to behold her once more, she was placed in an arm chair in the centre of the stage, surrounded and supported by a galaxy of distinguished performers, who had congregated in honor of her farewell. The curtain rose — she feebly bowed her thanks, her adieu — smiled upon the bouquets that fell in a floral deluge around her — the curtain descended upon her last triumph. She was taken home, and in two days breathed her last.

A host of similar instances might be given to illustrate how difficult it is for an actor to admit the possibility of his physical condition interfering with the discharge of his public duty.. It was an impression of this kind, deeply stamped upon my mind, that lured me to commit the indiscretion of endeavoring to perform on my second night in Memphis.

Mrs. Haller has but a few words to speak in the first act; and those I managed to utter, though with difficulty, for a fresh attack of bronchitis was added to incipient malaria. In the second act I had scarcely entered upon the stage before I began to be aware that I had miscalculated my powers. The third time I attempted to speak I found my voice had entirely departed. Again and again I tried to force out a sound — but my lips opened and closed again noiselessly. Dr. S——h, who afterwards attended me, used to say that he never

witnessed an exhibition at once so comical and so painful. The lips moving without producing the faintest articulation—the look of consternation quickly followed by an expression of resolution not to be vanquished—the impotent battle with the inevitable.

But I *was* conquered—I could not speak, and I could not have maintained an erect position much longer. The considerate manager, Mr. Charles, who occupied the stage with me, instantly apologized to the audience, and the curtain fell.

For nine days I remained dangerously ill. Dr. S——h advised that I should be removed the instant that I could bear the journey. He gave it as his medical opinion that, although it was hardly possible for me to rally in that atmosphere, I would rapidly recover when I once reached the other side of the mountains. We left Memphis on the twelfth day of our sojourn there, and, travelling slowly, arrived at my sister's residence, in Philadelphia, in ten days more. As Dr. S——h predicted, I began to revive as soon as we passed the mountains, and was soon convalescent.

At this period Mrs. Warner was about to leave America, where she had encountered a series of most heartbreaking trials. The autumn previous I had promised her my services for a benefit, at any time when she chose to call upon me. I thus hoped to make amends, in a slight degree, for the losses and discomfitures which had waylaid her whole path in a foreign land. She was now just recovering from a dangerous illness—or rather, was supposed to be recovering. Late tidings bring the sad intelligence of a relapse, which it is feared may prove fatal. She was to receive a complimentary benefit at the Howard Athenæum, in

Boston, and requested the fulfilment of my promise. I consented to enact Desdemona to her Emelia, and went to Boston for that purpose about the middle of May. On the morning of the benefit Mrs. Warner was still unable to leave her apartment. The benefit, however, took place, and a thronged attendance proved the high estimation in which she was held by an American public. Mrs. M. Jones filled the *rôle* of Emelia in Mrs. Warner's stead. I represented Desdemona — Mr. Marshall Othello. I once more used my voice with great facility; but the exertion consequent even upon so unarduous a performance made me conscious of unusual deficiency of strength and elasticity.

I had arranged to make an extensive western tour during this summer, which was to be my last upon the stage. But

“L’homme propose, Dieu dispose.”

I had never recovered entirely from my attack in Memphis. Early in June I was again taken seriously ill. After six weeks of suffering, which surpassed in severity all my previous experiences of what mortality can endure, my father insisted that I should be brought to his residence at Ravenswood and placed under the care of the celebrated Dr. M——tt, whose eminence as surgeon and physician has been recognized in both hemispheres, and has even rendered him famous on olden, classic ground.\*

I had lost all power of locomotion, and was thoroughly helpless. But I had made not a few journeys before on temporary beds, placed in railway cars and in car-

\* See Mott's Travels in Europe and the East.

riages, and was now forced to this sad necessity again. (I must say that I greatly preferred my seat of hay in the corner of the old ox cart, which jolted us over the frozen wilds of Indiana.) My faithful sister May, at whose house in Boston I had been residing, accompanied me. We reached our father's dwelling in safety, and I was borne to the sunny, white-curtained chamber, where I am now reclining.

Month after month has glided away, — the flower-scented Summer has buried her perfumes and flown, — the crimson-fingered Autumn has trampled her tinted foliage under foot and departed, — Winter is beginning to show his hard-featured and frostbitten face, and finds this little chamber still my compulsory abiding-place. There have been no flower gatherings, no garden ramblings, for me since June. Day after day I have looked out with longing eyes upon the gardens beneath my window, and watched the flowers, that enamelled the fair earth, one by one pale on their stems — wither and disappear. The last dahlia has just dropped its head and died. There are a cluster of pine trees that look in at one of my windows, and I have found daily delight — I might say actual comfort — in gazing at their emerald beauty. I know every branch, every little twig, almost every bird, which, through the summer, has sat in the boughs and made vocal the air with his matin songs. The wind plays through those pine-tree branches, as on an instrument, with a muffled, musical sound, like that of a human voice, called by singers a "veiled voice." I have never heard wind sighing, through any other trees, produce the same hushed, murmuring melody. And what gloriously golden sunsets I have beheld through those pine-tree

branches, as I lay looking out at the sky ! what soft moonlight shinings ! what brilliant starlight gleamings ! One of my chief amusements is watching the setting sun, that at each departure assumes some farewell robe of varied splendor. And sometimes I muse upon a life's early dawn that broke, flooding the horizon with radiance ; upon the storms that gathered before morning had passed ; upon clouds that parted at noon-day, to let through an unlooked-for effulgence ; and as I dreamily gaze at the sun, going down in mellow glory, I think of a sunset of peace that may be given for such a life's closing.

I lift my eyes, and they fall upon the pine trees again. But now the rich green of their plummy foliage is taking a rusty hue ; for Winter, as he strides on with ice-shod feet, has breathed upon them coldly. The clustering cones that brownly spangled the boughs have ripened ; and the wind is shaking them to the ground, like hopes that fall to plant the seed of new hopes. I shall see the snow enshroud the pine-tree branches, and be still a prisoner. Yet, even in a sick chamber, the slow movement of life may be calm and glad. Patience may pour upon the spirit her medicinal balm. Hope may sit enthroned in the heart, shining with steadfast lustre. Memory, unfolding her tablets, may point to some bright and consoling records. The voices of tenderness may fall in music on the pain-quicken'd ear. The holy ties of kinship, the adamant chains of friendship, may be drawn closer than ever. Let my future be cast where it may, I must perforce look back with loving remembrance upon the pleasant little chamber beneath my father's roof, where, if I have suffered much, I have rejoiced more.

The ten sisters have never again been gathered in the paternal home; but each one not separated by the ocean has come, in turn, to shed her sweet influence around the couch of the invalid — some to spend but days, some weeks, and some months. And the tender second mother has flitted in and out each day, drawing the sunshine after her, and performing thoughtful offices of love; and the young sisters, whose home I now share, have gladdened the room with their blooming presence, their prattling tongues; and the faithful attendant, who has journeyed with me by land and by sea, has proved as devoted and as patient by the couch of sickness as she was cheerful and intrepid in our far-off wanderings.

And last, though ever first, shall I not reverently speak of your precious visits to the cheerful chamber, my father? Shall I say no word of you, who, through the varied vicissitudes of my life, sustained and encouraged me in all my strenuous exertions — you, who consoled me under all my hard trials — you, whose own unconquerable energy has taught me how to battle with life's ills — whose example of smiling fortitude has shown me how to be victorious over inflexible circumstance — whose recognition of divine Providence, even in things most minute, has strengthened my faith — whose daily acts have given to your precepts double weight — you, who forgot the shortcomings of my wayward girlhood, and opened your arms, your heart, to me without breathing one reproach? May I not record these things of you, and say, that to you I owe the possession of some of those qualities which have rendered your own struggles in life blessed — which have made manifest the softening uses of sorrow? Surely this is a tribute which a child may pay to a father, even in the world's full



hearing. I do not attempt to restrain the outgushing of my spirit when I speak of you. My memoirs would neither be truthful nor complete if they contained no chronicle such as I have written above.

Two thirds of those memoirs have been penned in the quiet little chamber I have described—penned during intervals from suffering and a period of slow convalescence.

When I fully recover my health, (as the distinguished physician mentioned above, who has expended his skill upon me for nearly five months, is confident I shall do,) I purpose taking a brief farewell of my profession in some of the principal cities of the Union. I desire to leave that profession as calmly and as deliberately as it was entered; for I shall bid it adieu with those objects, imperiously summoned by which I first bore the name of actress, happily accomplished.

I will here answer a question in relation to the stage which I am frequently asked. There are some who may be profited by the reply. "Are you fond of the stage?" has been the inquiry put by many lips during the last eight years. There is a species of aristocratic affectation existing amongst the members of the profession, which induces many of them to declare that they detest their own vocation—that they dislike nothing so much as acting, &c. I have heard this assertion again and again from the mouths of the most successful performers; and all affectation seems to me so inconsistent with true talent that I could not but listen in wonder. But, as I have said, to declare that the stage is distasteful, is looked upon as a sign of professional aristocracy. For my own part, I answer frankly, I have received intense delight from the personation of some characters.

The power of swaying the emotions of a crowd is one of the most thrilling sensations that I ever experienced. Yet I have *not* found in the profession the kind of absorbing fascination which I have often heard described as inseparable from the stage. There were too many incongruous elements mingled with every dramatic triumph for the charm, if any, to be complete. Without looking upon the theatre as a Circean bower, without entertaining a *passion* for the stage, I have a quiet love for the drama, which, Heaven forbid, with my convictions in regard to its use, I should ever shrink from acknowledging. Without some decided attachment for the profession, I cannot conceive how the fatigues, the vexations, the disappointments incident even upon the most successful theatrical career, could be supported.

Let me here venture to warn any enthusiastic young aspirant against adopting the stage, unless her qualifications—not to use a much abused word, and say her *mission*—seem particularly to fit her for such a vocation, unless she be strongly impelled by the possession of talents which are unquestionable, unless she be enamoured of Art itself. But that the dangers of the profession are such as they are generally accredited to be, I do not believe; for I have known too many women bred upon the stage, whose lives were so blamelessly exemplary, whose manners so refined, whose intellect so cultivated, that they would adorn any sphere of society. The subject is not one into which I can fully enter; but this let me say, that the woman who could be dazzled by the adulation bestowed upon her talents as an actress, would be dazzled and led astray in the blaze of a ball room, in the excitement of social inter-

course, in any situation where those talents could be displayed, in any position where she could hear

“The false glozings of a flattering tongue.”

And from these where will she be shielded, except in utter seclusion?

But to return to the subject from which I wandered. Unless the actress in anticipation is willing to encounter disappointment in myriad unlooked-for shapes; to study incessantly, and find that her closest study is insufficient; to endure an amount and kind of fatigue which she never dreamed of before; if she feel “the grasshopper a burden,” and the “crumpled rose leaf” an inconvenience to her slumber, I would bid her shun the stage. But if she be prepared to meet petty as well as formidable trials, (the former are often more difficult to bear than the latter;) if she be sustained by some high purpose, some strong incentive; if she act in obedience to the dictates of the “stern lawgiver, Duty,” — then let her enter the profession boldly; by gracing, help to elevate the stage; and add hers to the purifying influences which may dwell within the walls of a theatre as securely as in any other temple of art. Let her bear in mind that the sometimes degraded name of “actress” can be dignified in her own person. Let her feel, above all things, that the actress must excite *reverence* as well as admiration. The crowd must *honor* as well as *worship*. They can always be made to do the latter at the feet of genius; they can only be compelled to do the former when genius sheds its halo around higher attributes.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

*My Claims to offer a Defence of the Stage.*—Lord Bacon on the Drama.—Sir Joshua Reynolds.—D'Israeli.—The rude Attempts of Thespis.—Æschylus.—Existence of Theatres at the Time of the first Christian Era.—The Apostles.—St. Paul's Quotations from three dramatic Poets.—The Parables and the Drama.—Dr. Isaac Watts.—The Emperor Marcus Aurelius upon the Stage.—Martin Luther.—The Rev. Dr. Knox.—Philip Melancthon.—Lord Bacon.—Dr. Blair.—Sir Philip Sidney.—Dr. Gregory.—Sir Walter Scott.—Calcraft.—Art.—Use and Abuse.—With whom it lies to reform the Errors of the Stage.—Two Hundred clerical dramatic Authors.—Dramas of the Archbishop Gregory Nazianzen; of Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea.—Sir Thomas More.—Tragedies of Milton, of Dr. Edward Young, of Rev. H. Milman, Rev. Dr. Croly, Addison, Dr. Johnson, Coleridge, Thomson, Goldsmith, Miss Hannah More, Miss Joanna Baillie, Miss Mitford.—The Stage: Pope's Exposition of its Use; Crabbe's ditto; Shakspeare's.—My own Experience.—The true Position of Actors.—Their Rank in ancient Times.—The high social Position held by many Actors in the present Time.—A Word of Farewell to the Members of the Profession.—These Memoirs.

I HAVE been for eight years an actress. In the exercise of my vocation I have visited many theatres throughout this land and in Great Britain. This fact, perhaps, gives me some right to speak upon the stage as an institution; upon its uses and abuses; for I speak (in all humility be it said) from actual knowledge and personal experience. My testimony has, at least, the value of being disinterested; for I was not bred to the stage; I entered upon it from the bosom of private life; none who are linked to me by affinity of blood ever

belonged to the profession ; I am about to leave it of my own choice ; and I bid it farewell in the midst of a career which, if it has reached its meridian, has not, as yet, taken the first downward inclination. I can have no object in defending the drama apart from the impulse to utter what I believe to be truth and an innate love and reverence for dramatic art.

The stage is not an insignificant pastime. History teaches us that it is an institution which has existed almost from time immemorial ; protected by the laws ; consecrated by the dramatic teachings of divines and sages ; and accepted as a mode of instruction, as well as of diversion, in almost all lands. It is a school most important in its operations, most potent in its admonitions, most profusely productive of good or evil influences. The actor sways the multitude even as the preacher and the orator, often more powerfully than either. He arouses their slumbering energies ; elevates their minds ; calls forth their loftiest aspirations ; excites their purest emotions ; or, if he be false to his trust, a perverted instrument, he may minister to vitiated tastes, and help to corrupt, to enervate, to debase.

“It is impossible,” says a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, “for a person unacquainted with dramatic representations to understand the effect produced on a mixed mass of the people, when a striking sentiment is uttered by a popular actor. The conviction is instantaneous. Hundreds of stormy voices are awakened ; the spirit of every individual is in arms ; and a thousand faces are lighted up, which, a moment before, seemed calm and powerless ; and their impression is not so transient as may be thought. It is carried home and nursed till it ripens. It is a germ which blossoms out into patriotism, or runs up rank into prejudice or pas-

sion. It is intellectual property honestly acquired. Men are often amused, and sometimes instructed, by books. But a tragedy is a great moral lesson, read to two senses at once; and the eye and the ear are both held in alliance to retain the impression which the actor has produced."

Lord Bacon tells us that "the drama is as history brought before the eyes. It presents the images of things as if they were present, while history treats of them as things past."

Sir Joshua Reynolds says, "Every establishment that tends to the cultivation of the pleasures of the mind, as distinct from those of the sense, may be considered as an *inferior school of morality*, where the mind is polished and prepared for higher attainments."

D'Israeli (the elder) declares that "the stage is a supplement to the pulpit, where virtue, according to Plato's sublime idea, moves our love and affection when made visible to the eye."

It was in the age of the wise Solon, something more than two thousand four hundred years ago, that the rude dramatic attempts of Thespis awoke the admiration of the Athenians. The performances he instituted were a species of monologue, relieved by chorus. Upon this imperfect foundation the noble Æschylus built the classic drama, and gained the name of the "father of tragic song." Since that period, in those countries where civilization has made the most rapid progress, where the social tone has been most elevated, where taste and refinement have superseded mere sensuality, the Drama has held her most prosperous sway. Dramatic art was at its zenith in Rome during the Augustan age; in Greece when Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides taught in her dramatic temples; in France dur-

ing the so called "golden reign" of Louis XIV., when Corneille and Racine wrote, not merely *moral*, but absolutely *religious* plays; and even Voltaire impressed piety into his tragedies. (That his other works are pervaded with an opposite spirit does not alter this fact.) Dr. Isaac Watts, the distinguished, divine, says, "What a noble use have Racine and Corneille made of Christian subjects in some of their best tragedies!"

In England the drama — though often lamentably misused and degraded — shed glory upon the reigns of Elizabeth and Anne, and is held in increasing honor at the present epoch — the most peaceful and prosperous with which that kingdom has ever been blessed.

Let us go back farther, even to the period of the first Christian era, and learn whether the outcry against theatres is justified by the records of antiquity. There were theatres in Jerusalem when our Savior came upon earth. Yet by no sign does he point them out as fatally pernicious; by no word, no *implication*, even, does he denounce them.

There were theatres at Damascus, at Ephesus, at Antioch, at Corinth, at Athens, at Thessalonica, at Philippi, at Alexandria, at Rome. The apostles preached the gospel in those cities, and reproved many vices; yet by no syllable of rebuke do they designate the theatre as immoral. Is it likely if an institution, which was to perpetuate itself down to the present day, were essentially demoralizing, it would have escaped the breath of their holy denunciation?

St. Paul is called the most learned of the apostles; and in his teachings he quotes from three Greek dramatic poets — from Arastus, of Cilicia; from Epimenides, of Crete; and from Menander, the Athenian; thus

giving his own countenance to the theatre by his familiar use of dramatic poetry.

In the sacred Scriptures there is not a single passage which, by any fair inference, can be distorted into a condemnation of theatrical entertainments. And yet how many sincere and truth-loving Christians believe it to be their duty to raise a hue and cry against the stage!

A distinguished clergyman of our own land lately remarked, from the pulpit, that he feared there were many persons, even among the denouncers of the drama, who were *beneath* a taste for the stage rather than *above* it; conveying the idea that the cultivation of those intellectual tastes and moral sympathies which find their gratification in dramatic performances, was a step in moral advancement which many unsympathizing decrifiers of the stage would not, or could not, take.

The parables are truths enveloped in fiction. The drama merely represents in action what the parable and similar fictions inculcate by written or oral teaching. The play is but the dramatized form of the poem, the novel, history, or the parable. And the mind is more vividly impressed by what it sees enacted than by what it hears related.

Take, for instance, the parable of the prodigal son. There can be no one so obtuse as not to admit the force and beauty of the illustration intended to be conveyed in it. Suppose that some dramatist, to enforce the lesson of paternal forgiveness upon minds which can be more deeply penetrated by visible symbols than by lecture, throws the parable into dramatic form, bringing out in appropriate language the whole moral of the story, and has it represented in a theatre. *Does the mere translation of the parable into represented action*



*render it pernicious?* In this illustration we have the whole principle of the drama.

A few seasons ago this very parable was produced as a spectacle at Drury Lane, under the name of Azael. It met with very decided success. I am not certain, but my impression is that it was translated from the French.

Dr. Isaac Watts, the author of Divine Hymns, thus alludes to the fitness of scriptural subjects for dramatic exposition: "If the trifling and incredible tales that furnish out a tragedy are so armed by art and fancy as to become sovereign of the rational powers, to triumph over the affections, and manage our smiles and our tears at pleasure, how wondrous a conquest might be obtained over a wide world, and reduce it at least to sobriety, if the same happy talent were employed in dressing scenes of religion in their proper figures of majesty, sweetness, and terror! The affairs of this life, with reference to a life to come, would shine brightly in a dramatic description."

This is high authority in favor of the drama. As a strong aid to my own imperfectly expressed arguments in its defence, I cull a few opinions from sources which command reverence out of the multitude that might be given, did space allow. The authorities I shall cite are such as should make any man pause before he ventures unconditionally to denounce the stage.

Marcus Aurelius, an emperor distinguished for his piety, says, "Tragedies were first brought in and instituted to put men in mind of worldly chances and casualties. After the tragedy, the *comædia vetus*, or ancient comedy, was brought in, which had the liberty to inveigh against personal vices; being, therefore, through this,

her freedom and liberty of speech, of very good use and effect to restrain men from pride and arrogance; to which end it was that Diogenes took also the same liberty."

Martin Luther, on the subject of the stage, says,\* "In ancient times the dramatic art has been honored by being made subservient to religion and morality; and in the most enlightened country of antiquity, in Greece, the theatre was supported by the state. The dramatic nature of the dialogues of Plato has always been justly celebrated; and from this we may conceive the great charm of dramatic poetry. Action is the true enjoyment of life; nay, life itself. The great bulk of mankind are, either from their situation or their incapacity for uncommon efforts, confined within a narrow circle of operations; *of all amusements, therefore, the theatre is the most profitable*, for there we see important actions when we cannot act importantly ourselves. It affords us a renovated picture of life, a compendium of whatever is animated and interesting in human existence. The susceptible youth opens his heart to every elevated feeling — the philosopher finds a subject for the deepest reflections on the nature and constitution of man."

In another work, Martin Luther says,† "And, indeed, Christians ought not altogether to fly and abstain from comedies, because now and then gross tricks and dallying passages are acted therein; for then it will follow, that, by reason thereof, we should also abstain from reading the Bible. *Therefore it is of no value that some allege such and the like things*, and for these causes would forbid Christians to read or act comedies."

The Rev. Dr. Knox, in his Essays, says, "There

\* See Luther's Tishgespräche.

† See Bell's translation of Mart. Lutheri Colloquia Mensalia.

seems to me to be no method more effectual of softening the ferocity and improving the minds of the lower classes of a great capital than the frequent exhibitions of tragical pieces, in which the distress is carried to the highest extreme, and the moral is at once self-evident, affecting, and instructive. The multitudes of those who cannot read, or, if they could, have neither time nor abilities for deriving much advantage from reading, are powerfully impressed, through the medium of the eyes and ears, with those important truths which, while they illuminate the understanding, correct and mollify the heart. Benevolence, justice, heroism, and the wisdom of moderating the passions are plainly pointed out, and forcibly recommended to those savage sons of uncultivated nature who have few opportunities, and would have no inclination, for instruction, if it did not present itself in the form of a delightful amusement."

Philip Melancthon says,\* "On frequent reflection concerning the manners and discipline of mankind, I greatly admire the wisdom of the Greeks, who at the commencement exhibited tragedies to the people, *by no means for the purpose of mere amusement, as is commonly thought*, but much more on this account, that, by the consideration of heinous examples and misfortunes, they might turn their rude and fierce spirits to moderation and the bridling of undue desires. These things, therefore, were acted, beheld, read, and listened to, both by the philosophers and the people, not as mere romances, *but as instructions for the government of life*. Men were thus warned of the causes of human calamities, which in those examples they saw brought on and increased by depraved desires."

\* Epistola de legendis Tragædiis et Comædiis.

Lord Bacon says,\* “Dramatic poesy, which has the theatre for its world, is of excellent use, if soundly administered. The stage can do much, either for corruption or discipline.”

Dr. Blair, one of the most eminent of divines, says, “Dramatic poetry has, among civilized nations, *been always considered a rational and useful entertainment*, and judged worthy of careful and serious discussion. As tragedy is a high and distinguishing species of composition, so also, in its general strain and spirit, it is favorable to virtue; and, therefore, though dramatic writers may, sometimes, like other writers, be guilty of improprieties, though they may fail in placing virtue forcibly in the due point of light, yet no reasonable person can deny tragedy to be a reasonable species of composition. Taking tragedies complexly, I am fully persuaded that the impressions left by them upon the mind are, on the whole, favorable to virtue and good dispositions. And, therefore, the zeal which some pious men have shown against the entertainment of the theatre must rest only on the abuse of comedy, which, indeed, has frequently been so great as to justify very severe censures against it. I am happy, however, to have it in my power to observe, that, of late years, a sensible reformation has begun to take place in English comedy.”

Sir Philip Sidney says,† “Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which the poet represented in the most ludicrous sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one. And little reason hath any man to say that men learn the evil by seeing it so set out; since

\* In the Essay De Augmentis Scientiarum.

† See his Defence of Poesie.

there is no man living, but, by the force truth has in his nature, no sooner seeth these men play their parts but wisheth them 'in pistrinum;' *so that the right use of comedy will, I think, by nobody be blamed. And much less the high and excellent tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants to manifest their tyrannical humors; that, with stirring the effects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of the world, and upon how weak foundations gilded roofs are built.*"

Dr. Gregory, in his "Legacy to his Daughter," says, "I know no entertainment that gives such pleasure to any person of sentiment or humor as the theatre."

Sir Walter Scott says,\* "The supreme Being, who claimed the seventh day as his own, allowed the other six days of the week for purposes merely human. When the necessity for daily labor is removed, and the call of social duty fulfilled, that of moderate and timely amusement claims its place, as a want inherent in our nature. To relieve this want, and fill up the mental vacancy, games are devised, books are written, music is composed, spectacles and plays are invented and exhibited. And if these last have a moral and virtuous tendency; if the sentiments expressed tend to rouse our love of what is noble, and our contempt of what is mean; if they unite hundreds in a sympathetic admiration of virtue, abhorrence of vice, or derision of folly, — it will remain to be shown how far the spectator is more criminally engaged *than if he had passed the evening in the idle gossip of society, in the feverish pursuits of ambi-*

\* Conclusion of the article Drama, in the Supplement to Encyc. Brit., vol. iii. p. 671.

*tion, or in the unsated and insatiable struggle after gain — the grave employments of the present life but equally unconnected with our existence hereafter.”* Were it not presumption, I should be inclined to differ with the assertion in the last line; for can the manner in which we employ a single moment here be unconnected with our existence hereafter? I think not.

The testimony of such minds and such men in favor of the stage are at least worthy of attentive consideration. And, be it observed, they address themselves to the most conscientious Christians as much, or *more*, than to the man who makes no particular profession of religious faith.

The stage, in almost all lands, and for a long series of years, has been protected and encouraged by governments. Would this have been the case if legislators had not found it conducive to the general well being of communities, and even a medium of political as well as of social and moral utility?

Calcraft, in his able and scholarly Defence of the Stage, mentions the act of Parliament from which the patent of the present Theatre Royal in Dublin (mentioned in an earlier chapter of these memoirs) is derived, as “containing these words in the preamble — ‘Whereas the establishing a well-regulated theatre in the city of Dublin, being the residence of the chief governor or governors of Ireland, will be productive of advantage, and *tend to improve the morals* of the people,’ &c. And the patent itself contains the royal intention and expectations distinctly expressed in these words: ‘That the theatre, in future, may be instrumental to the cause of virtue and instruction to human life.’ After which follow various restrictions, forbidding any performances tending to profaneness, disloyalty, or indecency.”

If, then, the stage be an institution acknowledged by the protection of governments as much as any which a passion for literature, or art, or science among men has established, is there not more wisdom in helping to elevate and guide its operations than in denouncing and traducing the institution itself?

Art is either right or it is wrong. The sanctioning voices of ages have pronounced it to be right. One branch of art includes the drama. Shall this branch be lopped off because the canker worm of evil has entered some of its fruit? Like sculpture, like painting, like music, like history, like the poem, the novel,—like every thing that ministers to faculties, which distinguish us from the brute creation,—the drama is either an instrument of good or evil, as it is rendered the one or the other by the use or abuse. This is the veriest truism. The theatre, like the press, is one of the most powerful organs for the diffusion of salutary or pernicious influences. Vicious books are often printed; but shall we, therefore, extirpate the press? Plays of questionable morality are sometimes enacted; but is that a cause for abolishing the stage —sacrificing for a temporary abuse the great and permanent use? False doctrines, and what are called heresies, have been preached from many a pulpit, and have led to the most fearful consequences; but shall the church therefore be calumniated? At the bar, the most flagrant wrongs have grown out of the perversion of legal exposition; but shall law, therefore, be banished from the land? Corrupt judges have given unjust sentences; shall the bench, therefore, be denounced? Physicians have destroyed instead of preserving life; shall the science of medicine, therefore, be set aside? Forgeries have been committed; shall penmanship, therefore, be wholly for-

bidden? And yet, if in one case abuse counteract use, why not in all?

A royal governor of Virginia (Sir William Berkeley) said,\* "I thank God that there are no free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years — for learning has brought disobedience, and heresies, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best governments. God keep us from both!" This assertion is *literally* true; but the royal governor looked but at one side of the question. The inveighers against the theatre do precisely the same. Because there are abuses, (most unquestionably separable from the use,) is that a wise or just argument for the holy indignation often expressed against the theatre and its upholders? About as wise and as just as were Sir William Berkeley's objections to the diffusion of knowledge.

Reform the errors of the stage, if you would serve the cause of human progress. No manager will produce plays that do not draw. It lies, then, with audiences to pronounce what representations shall receive their suffrages.

"The drama's laws the drama's patrons make."

But there has lately been a marked improvement in the class of plays offered to the public. That manager would be a bold one, who, at the Howard Athenæum, in Boston, or at Niblo's in New York, would produce a play of decided immoral tendency. His theatre would soon be closed, even without any loud denunciations from its outraged supporters. The community would forsake the establishment, and leave the "beggary account of

\* See Hildreth's History of the United States, vol. i. p. 524.



empty boxes" to proclaim their disapproval. Numerous other theatres in this country, as in England, are becoming more and more cautious in the choice of plays to be enacted within their walls. In England, the voice of the licenser is a check upon the representation of immoral dramas; in this country, the voice of the people is a far more powerful organ than that of any royal licenser in exerting a similar control.

Passages, even in Shakspeare, which were listened to by audiences a few years ago without manifestations of displeasure, are now entirely omitted by actors, and, if spoken, would inevitably be hissed. I do not mean to assert that there are not passages left which ought to be expunged; but I believe that, in time, they will not be tolerated; and I *know* that it is the fault, not of the actor, but of the audience, if their ears are ever offended. The actor is supposed to speak only what is set down for him; and, according to the strict regulations of some theatres, he would be heavily fined if he deviated, upon his own responsibility, from the text.

There are plays in abundance which the most pious parent may take his children to witness with profit. Men who have won the highest distinctions, not through their genius only, but for the piety and purity of their lives, have devoted their talents to writing for the stage.

*More than two hundred English clergymen have been dramatic authors.\**

The Archbishop Gregory Nazianzen wrote sacred dramas from the histories of the Old and New Testament, which were enacted upon the stage at Constantinople. From that stage pagan plays were consequently banished.†

\* See Baker's *Biographia Dramatica*.

† See Warton's *History of Eng. Poet.*, vol. iii. p. 196.

Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, wrote scriptural tragedies and comedies.

In ancient times, mysteries and moralities were not only written, but acted, by the clergy.

Sir Thomas More, the renowned statesman, both wrote and acted "interludes," as they were called.

Milton wrote the tragic poem of Samson Agonistes, and the masks of Arcades and Comus. The latter still keeps the stage. In the preface to his Samson Agonistes, he says, "Tragedy, as it was anciently composed, hath ever been held the greatest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems. Heretofore, men in highest dignity have labored not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy."

Dr. Edward Young, the author of Night Thoughts, wrote the tragedies of the Revenge, Busiris, and the Brothers. The latter was enacted for the express purpose of adding the proceeds to the fund for the propagation of the gospel in foreign lands.

The eloquent Rev. C. Maturin is the author of Bertram, (a favorite character of many distinguished tragedians,) also of Manuel, Fredolfo, and Osmyn the Renegade.

The Rev. H. Milman, author of the History of Christianity, wrote Fazio, in which the genius of Miss O'Neil shone preëminent. He also wrote Belshazzar's Feast, the Fall of Jerusalem, and the Martyr of Antioch.

The Rev. Dr. Croly wrote Catiline, and a comedy, which has been represented with great success, entitled Pride shall have a Fall.

The pious Addison wrote the tragedy of Cato, the comedy of the Drummer, and the opera of Rosamond.

Dr. Johnson wrote the tragedy of Irene.

Coleridge wrote two tragedies, *Remorse* and *Zapolya*, and translated Schiller's *Wallenstein*.

Thomson, Goldsmith, Miss Hannah More, Miss Joanna Baillie, Miss Mitford, have all contributed to the drama.

To these, did space permit, I might add the names of many other authors, as noted for their religious attributes as for their great gifts.

The soundest philosophers have declared that intellectual recreation was needful to the well being and mental health of man, and they have pronounced the stage to be one of the highest sources of such recreation. That rational amusement is a necessity of man's nature, imperatively demanded, Pindar and Aristotle have given their testimony. The former says, "Rest and enjoyment are universal physicians;" the latter, that "it is impossible for men to live in continual labor — repose and games must succeed to cares and watching."

To unite amusement with instruction is to give relish to nourishment. The man whose energies are worn out with the daily struggles in life, when he sees portrayed the sterner battle of some other life on the mimic world called the stage, forgets the cares that press too heavily on his own heart and paralyze its strength; he passes out of the narrow circle in which his selfhood is hourly bound; his faculties are quickened and refreshed by listening to sparkling wit; the finest chords within his bosom are stirred by the breath of the poet's inspirations. Emotions — devotional, heroic, patriotic, or soothingly domestic — sweep over his prostrate spirit, and lift it up from the contact with the dust of realities. He returns to his labors invigorated, strengthened, and elevated by

the relaxation. In our working-day community, it is to such men that the theatre performs one of its chief uses. But there are other uses which address themselves to the mass. Pope tells us, —

“To make mankind, in conscious virtue bold,  
Live o’er each scene, and *be* what they behold;  
For this the Tragic Muse first trod the stage,  
Commanding tears to stream through every age.” \*

And even the stern Crabbe has said,† —

“Yet Virtue owns the Tragic Muse a friend;  
Fable her means — morality her end.  
She makes the vile to Virtue yield applause,  
And own her sceptre while they break her laws;  
For vice in others is abhorred of all,  
And villains triumph when the worthless fall.”

Shakspeare, the great mind-reader, the most thorough-grasper of all the subtleties of human character, wrote no fiction when he said, —

“Guilty creatures, sitting at a play,  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul, that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions.”

The annals of the stage contain a number of startling instances where this has been literally the case. A remarkable one is recorded in the life of the English actor Ross. In my own comparatively brief experience upon the stage, I have been an eye witness to salutary effects of this description. One occasion I have related in an earlier chapter of these memoirs. If the acting of a play has been instrumental in causing “joy among the

\* Prologue to Addison’s Tragedy of Cato, by Alexander Pope. Bell’s British Theatre.

† The Library, a Poem.

angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth," what stronger proof can there be that the theatre is a useful institution?

If the lingering abuses in our theatres are to be reformed, it can only be done by the mediation of good men, "not so absolute in goodness as to forget what human frailty is," who, discarding the illiberal spirit which denounces without investigating, will first examine the reasons of existing abuses, then help to remedy them by their own presence amongst the audience.

That the very worst abuse with which any theatre can be taxed *may* be abolished, has been proved at the Howard Athenæum, in Boston, the Museum, and, indeed, all the theatres in that city, for five years, and at Niblo's, in New York, for a period even longer. I allude to the demoralizing effect of allowing any portion of the theatre to be set aside for the reception of a class who do not come to witness the play. I believe there have been other theatres in this country where this outrage upon morality is not tolerated, and the establishments have been as prosperous as those above mentioned. But this is a difficult topic for a woman to touch upon.

I cannot close these remarks upon the drama and the stage without a few words on the true position of actors. On this subject very erroneous impressions exist in the minds of those who do not frequent theatres. They are apt to look upon the actor as belonging to a distinct portion of the community, dwelling on the outer side of a certain conventional pale of society, which he is allowed to enter only by courtesy, unless it is broken through by the majesty of transcendent talents.

Let us examine his social and political state in ancient times when the stage first sprang into existence. The

profession of an actor was looked upon as honorable among the Greeks. Some of the highest offices of the state were held by players. Æschylus, who framed the regular drama, held command at Marathon under Miltiades. He was at once an actor and author. Sophocles was a man of high rank, and served under the great Pericles. He was raised to the office of archon. He appeared in his own tragedies, and sang on the stage to the music of the lyre. Euripides, who also acted in his own productions, was a distinguished officer.

The actor Neoptolemus, who was also a tragic poet, was an ambassador in an important mission.

Aristodemus was also employed on a momentous embassy. At the solicitation of Demosthenes he received the reward of a golden crown, bestowed for the faithful administration of public affairs.

Cicero himself was the intimate friend of Roscius, his early tutor. The great orator says of the equally great actor, "The excellences of Roscius became proverbial; and the greatest praise that could be given to men of genius in any particular profession was, 'that each was a Roscius in his art.'"

Lælius, called "the wise," and Scipio Africanus the younger, were the warm friends and associates of the actor Terence.

Julius Cæsar mentions Menander and Terence with respectful admiration.

The noble Brutus thought it was no waste of time to journey from Rome to Naples solely to see an excellent company of comedians. Their performances delighted him so much that he sent them to Rome with letters to Cicero. They were honored with the latter's immediate patronage.

Actors in all ages have been the especial favorites of monarchs and high dignitaries. In modern times, from Mrs. Siddons down to the present day, they have, in common with other artists, been received in the highest society, and been treated with marked distinction.

The stage, at this moment, is graced by members of the profession who have been the honored guests of nobles, and whom the magnates of more than one land have been proud to welcome at their firesides. The odium which has attached itself to some whose talents were as a brilliant setting which lacked the centre gem of paramount value can cast no more real blemish upon those who have not merited the same reproach than the despotism of one king can darken the reign of his successors.

If I have somewhat warmly pleaded the cause of the stage and the actor, I hope my testimony has been given as though I stood in the courts of Areopagus, where no flowers of rhetoric were permitted to adorn and falsely color the pleader's simple statement. I have looked upon the citation of facts as my strongest arguments. These, I think, will be patiently heard and justly weighed by the impartial tribunal of the American public, before which I stand to add my feeble voice to those already raised against the wrongs received by the stage, the drama, and the profession.

To the members of that profession, whose labors and honors I shall so soon cease to share, I would say, in bidding them farewell, that there are many amongst them whom I esteem, some to whom I am warmly attached, and more whose career I shall watch with anxious interest. I would beg them to believe that I sympathize in their toils—I comprehend their sacri-

fices — I appreciate their exertions — I respect their virtues; and I cherish the hope, that, in ceasing to be ranked amongst their number, I shall not wholly be forgotten by them.

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In writing these memoirs, although they were expressly designed for publication, I have endeavored to divest myself of all remembrance of the reader, in the same degree that I should mentally abstract and separate myself from an audience while interpreting a character upon the stage. By accomplishing this desired end, I have been enabled to give a more unreserved transcript of events than would otherwise have been possible.

In an autobiography, there seems a degree of egotism in the constant use of the first person singular, from which I have in vain sought some method of escape. For any consequent trenching upon the borders of good taste, I hope to be pardoned as for an unavoidable literary trespass. I have endeavored to write a simple and faithful narrative — unambitious, unembellished — “nothing extenuating,” and, assuredly, “setting down nothing in malice.” It is for the public to judge how imperfectly I may have executed my task. I lay down my pen with a sense of relief, which is in itself a guerdon; for I have fulfilled my promise.

“Leave here the pages with long musings curled,  
And write me new my future’s epigraph !”

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